

acheotomy helps Papandreou sit up

ATHENS (R) — Ailing Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou was sitting up in his hospital chair for the first time in two weeks on Friday and a government spokesman said he could go home this month. The reported improvement was largely due to a tracheotomy operation performed on Thursday, which eased Mr. Papandreou's breathing and improved his mobility. "His general condition is stable," a hospital statement said. "He is beginning to be more mobile and he remained sitting in his chair for about two hours." Government spokesman Telemachos Hytiris rushed to give the good news, saying Mr. Papandreou, 76, could go home this month if all went well. "If things go along the present course, it is expected that he could leave the hospital around the holidays," he told reporters. But Mr. Papandreou, placed in an intensive care unit with pneumonia 19 days ago, was still dependent on life-support machines for his failing kidneys and lungs. (see related story on page 12)

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Arafat signs election law

GAZA CITY (AP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has signed a law setting the rules for the Jan. 20 elections, officials in his office said Friday. The law has been criticised by smaller opposition groups which argued the winner-takes-all electoral system in 16 voting districts was weighted against them. They had demanded proportional representation. Mr. Arafat signed the law Thursday evening, after 40 days of review and negotiations with opposition groups. Elections for an 82-member Palestinian council are to be held Jan. 20, capping and Israeli troop withdrawal from most West Bank towns and villages. On Sunday, candidates are to announce that they are running for a council seat. An estimated 1.8 million Palestinians live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 155,000 in East Jerusalem. Of those, nearly one million have been registered as eligible voters.

Jordan receives league message

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti has received a message from Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid, dealing with the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) request to support the recognition of the Palestinian passport issued by the PNA. Dr. Abdul Meguid voiced hope that the Jordanian government do every possible effort to help recognise the Palestinian passport in the various countries.

Jordan seeks to clear dam project

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Al-Isheidat has said that the Jordanian side discussed with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres during his short visit to Jordan removal of all obstacles facing the implementation of the provisions of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, particularly the construction of a dam on the Yarmouk River, the Arabic daily Al Rai said. The newspaper quoted Dr. Isheidat as saying that he expects the Israeli authorities to grant the necessary licences within the next few days for Jordanian technical teams and equipment to enter the proposed dam construction area on the Israeli side to carry out the necessary soil-testing. Mr. Peres promised to facilitate the mission and Jordanian teams from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation Thursday visited the proposed dam site in Adasia area in Jordan.

French bomb suspect remanded in custody

LONDON (AFP) — Rachid Ramda, an Algerian wanted in connection with a series of bomb attacks in France, will be held here for another week while France prepares its case for extradition, a court ruled here Friday. The Bow Street magistrates remanded Ramda in custody until Dec. 16, two days before a deadline by which France must present its case for extradition. Ramda, 26, was one of five persons arrested here in early November in raids carried out in West London. French Justice Minister Jacques Toubon has said Ramda played a key role in the eight bombings or attempted bombings that have hit France since July 25.

Pro-Israeli killed in S. Lebanon blast

MARJAYOUN (R) — A pro-Israeli militiaman was killed in South Lebanon on Friday when a roadside bomb exploded near his patrol, pro-Israeli sources said. The blast hit the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen as the patrolmen were walking to the village of Kroum Al Arz in Jizzine, a finger of territory outside Israel's South Lebanon occupation zone but under SLA control. No group claimed immediate responsibility for the attack.

Pullout on schedule, Peres tells Arafat

Israeli soldiers kill Palestinian in Nablus clashes

EREZ (Agencies) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres promised Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Friday that Israel would stick to the timetable for an Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank by the end of the year. He also promised to release 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Israeli troops meanwhile opened fire on Palestinians Friday, killing one and wounding at least three in Nablus, witnesses and hospital officials said.

The clash came just a week before Israeli troops were to pull out of the West Bank's largest city, and one of the Palestinians involved in the clash said he and his friends initiated the violence "as far as to stone throwing." As Israel's chief peace negotiator, Mr. Peres has met repeatedly with Mr. Arafat, but Friday's one-hour session marked the first time the two leaders have met since the Nov. 4 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremist. "They murdered the prime minister, but they didn't murder the peace process, and they won't," Mr. Peres said. The prime minister said Israel's troop pullback from West Bank towns was "going rather smoothly," but warned the pace might slow if there were attacks on Israelis.



Israeli soldiers watch Palestinians during Friday prayers in the West Bank town of Bethlehem. The Israeli army is scheduled to withdraw from the city on Dec. 18 ahead of the first Palestinian Christmas there since 1967 (AFP photo)

In the past week, four Israeli soldiers were wounded in two shooting ambushes in the West Bank.

Mr. Arafat promised Friday he would coordinate with Israel to "stop all terrorist activities by all means." Under the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy agreement, Israel handed the West Bank town of Jenin to Palestinian

control last month, and the town of Tulkarem was to follow on Sunday, with 400 Palestinian police officers deploying in town. Israeli troops are to pull out of four more cities — Nablus, Kalkiliya, Bethlehem and Ramallah — by the end of December, ahead of Palestinian general elections on Jan. 20.

Mr. Peres said Friday that

Israel would free 1,000 more Palestinian security prisoners. He did not give a date for their release but Israel and the PLO have already agreed that the prisoner releases come before Palestinian elections.

The message we have delivered... is that all the commitments and all the dates.

(Continued on page 7)

Hamas awaits invitation to Cairo

AMMAN (AFP) — The Palestinian militant group Hamas said here Friday it was still waiting for an official invitation from Egypt for a planned dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Cairo.

"Any country seeking to mediate should send invitation to both parties, otherwise inviting only one party could work against the principle of impartiality," Amman-based Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghosheh told AFP. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Wednesday that reconciliation talks between Hamas and the PLO would go ahead as planned in Cairo, but he did not give a date.

"Egypt is open to both parties, who will meet in Cairo," Mr. Musa said. But Mr. Ghosheh questioned the choice of Cairo in the light of the "tension which flared there" after the ruling party won by a landslide on Wednesday in parliamentary elections held

(Continued on page 7)

Israel insists on early warning stations

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel has not given up its demand for early warning stations on the Golan Heights, saying it should not be a precondition for the resumption of peace talks with Syria.

Israel's ambassador to the United States Itamar Rabinovich said that Israel was still standing firm on its insistence that any deal to withdraw from the strategic plateau must provide for ground-based early warning stations. "The problem of early warning and in particular ground stations remains a very important component in our approach, in our position on the problem of the security arrangements," Mr. Rabinovich said on Israel's army radio.

But on Israel radio, Mr. Rabinovich said this demand was not a precondition for restarting peace talks with the Syrians.

"We are not trying to dictate to the Syrians conditions saying that if you don't accept beforehand our positions on

the early warning stations we won't discuss security arrangements with you," Mr. Rabinovich said.

Mr. Rabinovich's remarks came following a Middle East tour by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross in an effort to get the Syrian-Israeli talks going again.

"There were no concrete Syrian responses," Mr. Rabinovich said of Mr. Ross's shuttle.

The Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations have been suspended since June over Security arrangements on the Golan Heights after an expected Israeli withdrawal.

Mr. Rabinovich said that Secretary of State Warren Christopher was to visit the region in mid-December and that the possibilities would be clearer then.

Syria has conditioned their resumption on an Israeli declaration in advance that it is willing to withdraw from all of the Golan and that it drop its demand for the ground-based early warning stations. Washington has yet to con-

firm a Christopher visit.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who visits the United States this weekend, hopes that most Arab states would accept their signatures to a peace treaty between Israel and Syria and Lebanon when and if it is concluded, Mr. Peres' office said.

Israel has said it will only become clear if talks with Syria can resume after Mr. Peres meets President Bill Clinton next week in Washington in this first trip there since the murder of his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing Jew in November.

Peres spokesman Yarden Vatikay confirmed reports saying Mr. Peres wanted most Arab states to sign a Syria treaty.

Israel's Haaretz newspaper on Friday quoted Mr. Peres as saying:

"My intention is if we sign a treaty with Syria and Lebanon that there will be the signatures on the treaty of 15-20 more Arab states and

we will put an end to the state of war between us and all the Arab states outside of two or three."

Mr. Vatikay said: "Those (states) in doubt are Iran, Iraq, Libya."

In preparation for his Washington trip, Mr. Peres met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Thursday and King Hussein in Amman on Wednesday. He met Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat in Gaza on Friday. Mr. Peres' office said he planned to meet Morocco's King Hassan on the return trip from Washington (see page 2)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa criticised the idea of an Israel-U.S. defence pact Mr. Peres reportedly intends to raise in Washington, Israel's Davar Rishon newspaper said on Friday.

"You are reverting to talking in an old language. We agreed to talk peace. If you have a defence pact we will have our own defence pact," it quoted Mr. Musa as saying.

King Fahd to take rest after leaving hospital

DUBAI (Agencies) — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia was discharged from a Riyadh hospital late on Thursday, a week after being admitted with a stroke. U.S. officials said was a stroke.

King Fahd, 73, left hospital on Thursday evening, the royal court said in a statement read on Saudi television on Friday. It did not specify the king's illness but said his "sudden medical condition" was over.

The court said the king would spend an unspecified period of rest as ordered by his doctors.

Diplomats said his slightly younger half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah was expected to assume some of King Fahd's duties while the king, who assumed the throne of the world's largest oil producer and exporter in 1982, was recuperating.

King Fahd's illness triggered succession speculation although official statements stressed he was in good condition and said the results of his medical tests were reassuring.

The king, who has been the main architect of Saudi Arabia's policies for the past 20 years, was forced to miss an annual Gulf Arab summit in Oman which ended on Wednesday.

Crown Prince Abdullah represented the kingdom at the summit.

On Tuesday state television showed the first footage of the king since he fell ill. He spoke animatedly to princes and ministers while receiving dignitaries in a hospital salon.

The monarch could be seen smiling and chatting with royal family members in his suite at Riyadh's King Faisal specialist hospital.

The king, whose voice could not be heard, appeared relaxed though he kept adjusting his white headress. He was sitting in an armchair with a cane by his side.

It was the king's first public appearance since he was hospitalised Thursday with what the royal court described as a "temporary health emergency" caused by exhaustion from overwork.

Last week a team of U.S. doctors was flown in to

(Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu plummets in opinion polls

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The head of Israel's right-wing opposition has seen his popularity nosedive since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated last month, according to two opinion polls published Friday. Benjamin Netanyahu, head of the Likud Party, would win only 31 per cent of votes compared to 55 per cent for Mr. Rabin's successor Shimon Peres if an election were held now, a survey in the daily Maariv said. Another in the Yedioth Aharonot daily gave Mr. Peres 46 per cent of the vote and Mr. Netanyahu 28 per cent. Mr. Netanyahu was neck-and-neck with Mr. Rabin in the polls before the Labour Party premier was gunned down by a far-right Jewish fanatic at a peace rally in Tel Aviv on Nov. 4. The assassination sparked a backlash against the Israeli right-wing, with Mr. Rabin's widow Leah accusing Mr. Netanyahu of creating the climate of violence which led to the assassination. Israelis will directly elect their prime minister for the first time in legislative elections set for Oct. 29, 1996. In an attempt to salvage his ratings, Mr. Netanyahu has dropped his outright rejection of Israel's autonomy accords with the Palestinians.

Jordan backs GCC resolutions; Kabariti due in Qatar today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Friday welcomed the resolutions adopted by the recent summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and said he was beginning a visit to Doha, Qatar, today (Saturday) for discussions on bilateral relations and security-related issues.

Describing the Doha talks as part of continued consultations between Jordan and Qatar, Mr. Kabariti said the visit comes in response to an invitation extended to him by his Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasssem Al Thani, during the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit held in Amman.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordan was "very satisfied with the resolutions" adopted by the leaders of the GCC at last week's summit held in Muscat, Oman. "We fully agree with the resolutions as expressed in the final communiqué of the summit," the foreign minister told the Jordan Times.

The minister described as a "matter of modalities and technicalities" the dispute that surfaced when Qatar boycotted the final session of the summit in protest against the election of a Saudi diplomat instead of a Qatari as GCC secretary general.

"The summit should be gauged by the final resolutions that it adopted, and we are fully satisfied by the final communiqué of the meeting," said Mr. Kabariti.

The communiqué adopted a toughened position on Iraq, supported the United Arab Emirates in a dispute with Iran over three islands in the Gulf and warned against extremism, particularly emphasised by a bomb blast in

Riyadh that killed seven people last month.

Mr. Kabariti's talks in Doha are expected to be a follow-up to ideas and proposals floated during the MENA summit and on means to expand Jordanian-Qatari cooperation. Also expected to be discussed is the possibility of Jordan hosting a major terminal at Aqaba for Qatari gas to be exported to Israel.

Qatar and the U.S. Enron Corporation signed an agreement on developing Qatar's northern gas fields during MENA summit, and Israel and Enron signed a separate accord under which Enron will supply the Qatari gas to the Jewish state.

The gas, in liquefied form, will be sent by tankers to the Red Sea or the Mediterranean to a transit terminal where it would be reprocessed and sent to Israel, and it is expected that the terminal will be at Aqaba.

Mr. Kabariti and Qatari leaders are also expected to discuss the Middle East peace process and inter-Arab issues, including means to heal the rifts in Arab ranks.

While the dispute that surfaced at the GCC summit might not figure high in Mr. Kabariti's talks, the issue is seen to have underlined the delicacy of differences among the GCC members themselves.

Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, confirmed on Thursday that his boycott of the GCC summit was prompted by the disagreement over the appointment of a Saudi secretary-general for the alliance.

But the emir, making Doha's first public comment on Wednesday's boycott, did not say whether Qatar would go

(Continued on page 7)

Missile parts seized; Iraq disowns cargo

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian officials on Friday confirmed that authorities had intercepted a consignment of missile parts being shipped to Iraq in violation of the international sanctions against that country, and the official Iraqi media denied that the Baghdad government was involved in the shipment.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the consignment of Russian gyroscopes — which could be used in manufacturing missiles — had arrived at Queen Alia International Airport (QALA) aboard a Royal Jordanian (RJ) plane from Moscow in the second week of November. The crates were marked as electrical equipment.

"The authorities discovered that the boxes contained missile parts and the Jordanian government immediately informed the United Nations Sanctions Committee," said an official.

"Subsequently, officials from the Sanctions Committee as well as the Ekeus group," the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on dismantling Iraq, came to Jordan and inspected the equipment, added the official.

"All the details were noted down and entered into U.N. records by the U.N. officials before they left," said the official, who confirmed accounts by news agencies that the consignment was enough to equip "one hundred missiles."

The importer was identified as a businessman from Gaza holding a two-year Jordanian passport, (the name of the man cannot be published under standing Jordanian regulations) who was said to be operating an Amman-based import/export company.

The authorities kept a watch for the businessman to

turn up to claim the consignment, but he failed to show up, said the official, adding "the man is no longer in Jordan."

The French news agency (AFP), quoting an unidentified official, reported that the businessman had fled Jordan and was hiding in Iraq. According to the agency, the consignment was worth \$25 million.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Friday the Baghdad government was not involved in the shipment and that it had warned a "Jordanian middleman" against trying to send such equipment to Iraq.

The agency said the middleman, whom it did not identify, had approached the Iraqi government with "samples" of "dual purpose" equipment in early 1994, and that Baghdad had not only turned down the offer but also wrote an official letter to the man, a copy of which was also sent to UNSCOM.

The agency report suggested the equipment could have been used for civilian purposes as well as in the manufacture of missiles with a range of under 150 kilometres.

Under the terms of the U.N. resolutions, Iraq is permitted to produce missiles with a range of under 150 kilometres. But the gyroscopes intercepted in Amman could arm long-range Scud missiles, according to news agency reports.

The middleman renewed the offer to send "contraband material" to Iraq in 1995, and was again turned down by "an Iraqi industrial organisation," the agency said, quoting an unidentified government official.

Under the terms of the sweeping international embargo in force since its Aug. 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Iraq is banned from

(Continued on page 7)

Bosnia is poised for 'war or peace' — U.S. mediator

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnia is poised between "war and peace," U.S. peace mediator Richard Holbrooke said Friday after security key assurances from the Bosnian government on the full implementation of the Dayton peace accord.

After meeting Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, Mr. Holbrooke said he had been assured of the withdrawal of "mujahideen" volunteer fighters in government-held Bosnia, and a pledge from Sarajevo to "fully comply" with the Dayton accord.

"We are poised today (Friday) somewhere between war and peace. The war has stopped. The peace, initiated in Dayton, will be signed in Paris on Dec. 14 and then it must be implemented," Mr. Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State, told reporters.

The U.S. mediator was in Sarajevo for the first leg of a quick tour of Balkan capitals in the run-up to the Paris conference at which the Dayton peace accord he brokered will be signed by the presidents of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia.

With concern at home high over Washington's pledge to

deploy 20,000 troops to help implement the peace agreement in Bosnia, assurances from Mr. Izetbegovic over the withdrawal of mujahideen forces will eliminate one fear.

Echoing a statement made by Mr. Izetbegovic, Mr. Holbrooke told reporters he had been assured that "that all foreign elements that are within the control of the (Muslim-Croat) federation will be removed within 30 days or less as required" by annex 1A of the Dayton agreements.

Several hundred Islamic volunteer fighters, based in central Bosnia, have fought with the government army against both Croats and Serbs in the Bosnian conflict. Recently, tensions with British peacekeepers have been high after one of the volunteers was shot by a British soldier.

Mr. Holbrooke also said Mr. Izetbegovic had assured Washington that the Sarajevo government intended to "comply fully with every aspect" of the Dayton agreement and to "reach out to the Serbs (around Sarajevo)."

Following the Dayton talks

Mubarak secures docile legislature

CAIRO (AFP) — President Hosni Mubarak will be able to govern Egypt free of any serious opposition in parliament after the turbulent elections which prompted U.S. concern over charges of widespread vote rigging.

His ruling National Democratic Party's (NDP) grip on power was strengthened Friday when 99 victorious independents joined its ranks, bringing its total of seats to 416 out of 444.

Opposition parties, which accuse the government of a massive election fraud campaign to squeeze them out of the assembly, won only 13 seats after a second round of voting of Wednesday.

The remaining 15 deputies are independents, including one member of the opposition Muslim Brotherhood. Mr. Mubarak will appoint 10 more deputies to complete the house.

With three per cent of the seats, the opposition in parliament will be the weakest ever since multi-party elections began in Egypt in 1976.

No Coptic Christians, numbering some 10 per cent of the population, were elected to the house, after reports of a Christian's victory in south Egypt proved incorrect.

The new deputies are to be

sworn in an opening parliamentary session on Wednesday, and Mr. Mubarak will address the new house in its first working session on Dec. 16, the government-run Al Akhbar said.

Demonstrations and violence flared in a number of north Nile Delta towns on Thursday after results were announced in the elections which saw a string of clashes which, in both rounds, left 37 dead and 124 injured.

Egyptian rights groups called on Mr. Mubarak to annul the vote and appoint an "impartial government" to conduct new elections due to "fraud on a massive scale."

The fraud reports have already led to a court battle after an administrative court ruled that results in a third of the seats must be cancelled due to rigging.

The Interior Ministry appealed the decision and a higher court is to decide the appeal on Saturday.

The United States, which provides \$2.1 billion in aid to Egypt annually, urged Egypt for a second time to investigate claims of vote fraud after the run-offs.

"We fully expect that the Egyptian government will investigate charges of irregularities."

(Continued on page 7)



KING NAMES BABY: His Majesty King Hussein Thursday names the baby boy born this week to Prince Miri'd Ben Ra'ad and Princess Dina Miri'd at a special ceremony held at the Royal Court in the presence of the King's advisor and Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi. King Hussein named the new-born baby Rakan. The ceremony was attended by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, HRH Prince Faisal, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, other members of the Royal family and guests (Photo by Crystal)

Women's union to reduce domestic consumption to fight price hikes

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian women have picked up a call from the Consumer Protection Society (CPS) to reduce domestic consumption as part of an effort to fight the rise in prices of products on the market.

The call was launched on Wednesday by Mohammed Obeidat, president of the CPS and was welcomed by the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) which immediately formed a committee to address price issues and take effective measures in fighting price hikes.

"Jordanian women should first start by boycotting 'convenience products' such as coffee, tea and eggs for one week," said Dr. Obeidat.

He stressed that 60 per cent of the responsibility of the rise in prices falls directly on the consumer who does not look for alternatives when the price is high.

Women who attended the seminar entitled "The Role of Jordanian Women in

Fighting the Rise of Living Costs," held at the JWU, responded positively to the idea, but argued that the boycott of certain food-stuffs, the prices of which are continuously on the rise, such as eggs, meat and yoghurt, could adversely affect the nutritional health of children.

They also said that certain products which include hygienic paper and gasoline would be too difficult to boycott.

A CPS study, which will be published next month, shows that during the past year the prices of 103 kinds of basic needs products under the control of the Ministry of Supply have risen by up to 60 per cent.

"The prices of some of these products have risen three times during the past year," Dr. Obeidat said.

He added that prices will continue to increase because future government plans show that the Ministry of Supply will eventually be dissolved to allow the country to have an open market economy.

"The CPS is not against

the floatation of prices as long as basic food prices for low-income families do not increase," Dr. Obeidat said.

An earlier CPS study showed that the basic foods which Jordanian families rely on are tomatoes, potatoes, onion, garlic, sugar, tea, rice, milk and bread.

The JWU formed a committee at the end of the seminar to set up a working agenda to fight the hike in the prices.

"As a women's movement, we will call on all unions and non-governmental organisations in Jordan to form a policy for the boycott of certain basic foods with the provision of alternatives for the boycotted products," said Najwa Masri, a member of the newly formed committee.

The boycott period for each item would last one week, she added.

JWU has 10 centres and eight branches located in the different governorates of Jordan.

Lebanese products fair opens today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and Lebanese Ambassador to Jordan William Habib will today inaugurate an eight-day fair of Lebanese products at the Philadelphia Hotel.

The fair was organised by the Lebanese Industrialists and the Beirut Chamber of Commerce in implementation of an economic and trade agreement signed by Jordan and Lebanon in 1992, according to the min-

istry. The fair, in which 41 major Lebanese companies are participating, will display clothes, leather products, suitcases, cosmetics, gifts and ornaments as well as household items.

According to Mr. Habib, Jordan will organise an industrial fair in Beirut in March next year to display its own products.

He said industrialists from Jordan recently increased their contacts

with their Lebanese counterparts and it is hoped that the coming year will witness an increase in bilateral activities between the two countries.

In Aug. 1995, Lebanese Minister of Agriculture Shawqi Fakhouri signed an agricultural agreement with the Kingdom opening up opportunities of exchange in agricultural products between both countries.

5-year health programme soon to enter sustainable phase, says U.N.

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has done fairly well in implementing a five-year health programme in coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Kingdom should be moving soon into the phase of building more capacity and systems to sustain what has been accomplished.

This was one of the key findings of a review made by UNICEF and Jordanian officials and experts gathered on Thursday for a "mid-term review" of the 1993-97 programme.

Dealt with at length during the one-day event were the actual changes in health and education facilities in the Kingdom, positive achievements, problems encountered and suggested solutions.

One of the main points stressed during discussions was that it was time for many programmes directly

run by UNICEF to be shifted to the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education since the programmes have taken strong roots and are now self-sustainable.

Dorrit Alopaeus-Stahl, UNICEF area representative for Jordan, noted that from the outset all aspects of the country programme were open to "healthy, constructive criticism" and told the gathering: "I strongly believe that we have made real and considerable gains in terms of clarity and a better platform for forward planning in being so transparent."

"I do think that the...programme has done a very good job overall in the past, and in the future we'll be able to be even more focused, more strategic in our planning and programme implementation," added Ms. Alopaeus-Stahl, who took office in Jordan only a few weeks ago.

Ms. Alopaeus-Stahl paid

tribute to Jordanian government organisations involved in the implementation of the programme and noted that some of the features of the Kingdom had undergone serious changes since the programme was launched.

The changes included the more than 10 per cent increase in the population (as a result of the return of expatriates following the Gulf crisis), additional commitments made at the International Conference on Population and Development, the Social Summit and the World Conference on Women, developments in the Middle East peace process, and the Middle East and North Africa economic summit which "added to the regional profile of Jordan."

"Nationally, the work on women and children has accelerated with the Royal Decree on the National Task Force for Children as well as the prominent role

played by the national machinery for women in the preparations and follow-up of the Beijing (women's) conference," she said, adding: "In the challenging work for disabled persons, especially children and youth, Jordanian examples are encouraging, indeed."

Noting the progress made in the various projects launched as part of the country programme in Jordan, the UNICEF official said: "In the changed political and economic environment in Jordan at present, a gradual decrease of emphasis on supplies services towards more of capacity and systems building may be necessary to allow us to go from the accomplished survival phase into one of sustainable development while further identifying high-risk population groups and areas."

The 1993-97 Jordan country programme sets out three major objectives—

reducing infant mortality rates from 37 to 25 and under-five mortality rate from 47 to 35; reducing maternal mortality (pregnancy—or delivery-related death) rate from an estimated 40 to 25, and imparting basic life skills for all Jordanians for healthy living and becoming full contributors to the community.

Jordan achieved the first goal in 1995, but work remains to be done to reach other objectives, said Mr. Alopaeus-Stahl. "We know that goals are reachable, but we must find the right ways and means of doing it and then maintaining the high standards."

While there are constraints on funding, this should not be an impediment in going ahead, she said, emphasising that "it is never only money that counts in sustainable development. It needs to be boosted by creativity and cost efficiency."

'Incentives for low-cost housing projects could attract investors'

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The private sector will be willing to invest in low-income housing and produce better quality apartments at lower costs provided the government offers this sector the same privileges as the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) such as exemption from taxes and finance guarantees.

At a three-day workshop, entitled "The Evaluation of the Housing Sector" organised by HUDD, participants from the private sector, which contributes 88 per cent of the investment in the housing sector, said that their legitimate demands and recommendations could contribute to solving the high demand for low-income housing in the Kingdom.

They saw the HUDD, the organiser of the workshop, as not being responsible for the decision-making process in the country, and therefore unable to change the laws concerning finance or the division of land units and that it has not developed an implementation mechanism.

"The decision could only be taken through the Cabinet," said Fawaz Hassan, an investor.

He added that it would be cheaper for investors and for the buyer to build in the suburbs, but in these areas the division of land begins at a minimum of 10 dunums, which he stressed is too large a unit to invest in.

The 1994 Population and Dwelling census showed that 150,000 apartments are vacant in Jordan, not because there was no

demand, but because the rents were too high.

The same study showed that an average house costs six times more than the annual income of a Jordanian family.

"In the next 20 years the demand will be for low-income housing. As a private sector, we look for profit and incentives, but we are willing to lose five per cent of the profit to invest in low-income housing projects if we obtain the same privileges as HUDD," Mohammad Keilani, president of the Jordanian Investors Society, told the Jordan Times.

The government guarantees HUDD's loans, exempts the institution from income and property transfer taxes and gives it special building quotas which include division of land into smaller units.

Fayrouz Massud, director of the Regional Planning Department at the Municipality of Greater Amman, said that the current organisation of Amman; the number of floors limited to each area, the zoning space and the size of the houses affects the accommodating capacity of the city.

This technique of organisation, said Mr. Massud, has created a high demand for houses in eastern Amman because the small spaces are affordable and there is low demand for housing in the west of the city, which, he added, is full of empty apartments.

The solution to the problem, according to Mr. Massud, "is a master plan for land use in the Kingdom, where people from east Amman can afford to live in the western part of the city."

Light earthquake hits Aqaba

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Aqaba residents were awakened Friday by a light earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale, causing no casualties or damages, official sources said.

"We were frightened early Friday morning by the quake that shook our house and woke us up," Amira Hussein, an Aqaba resident said.

"My husband and I and my children took shelter in a corner of our house and stood there until the quake was over," she added.

Like many Aqaba residents, Mrs. Hussein said she was overwhelmed by the 6:15 a.m. earthquake "especially that we were

informed by officials and the television that the series of earthquakes and tremors and their effects will decrease gradually, but instead we were struck with a new tremor," said Mrs. Hussein.

A similar earthquake jolted the Gulf of Aqaba two days ago during the day but was not felt by Aqaba residents, said Mohammad Dawoud Fandi, a geophysicist at the Natural Resources Authority (NRA). "But this one (Friday's) was felt because it was quiet and everybody was sleeping."

Mr. Fandi said that the earthquake was an aftershock of the powerful earthquake which struck the area on Nov. 22, and "it is normal to have such

aftershocks."

He told the Jordan Times Friday that quake activities have decreased and would become steadily weaker.

"The Earth's crust is becoming stable, and it might take two to four weeks before the series of tremors will come to an end," Mr. Fandi said.

According to Mr. Fandi, the earthquake, which was centred 100 kilometres from Aqaba, occurred in the same place as the Nov. 22 incident at the same time, 6:15 a.m.

The November occurrence measured 6.2 on the Richter scale.

In Jordan, one person died of a heart attack, and 19 people were injured.

Education seminar to look into ways to develop human resources

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education will Sunday take part in a three-day regional meeting on education present a comprehensive working paper on teacher training and the status of education in both private and public schools in Jordan, according to an announcement Friday.

The ministry statement said the paper deals with enrolment and drop-out rates, distribution of students in schools, training of teachers, and the rate of illiteracy.

Organised by the regional

office of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) the meeting, held under the title "Educational indicators for human resource development in Arab countries" is to be attended by delegates from 17 Arab countries.

The ministry said the meeting hopes to promote technical cooperation among education ministries and research institutes.

The meeting, which will be opened by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf

Rawabdeh, is expected to arrive at specific criteria concerning human resource development at the educational level in the Arab countries, the ministry added.

The ministry said delegates from Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Algeria, Sudan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Kuwait, Qatar, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Yemen are also expected to draw up the broadlines of a booklet dealing with educational development in the region.

Ministry prepares for Arbor Day

AMMAN (Petra) — Millions of tree saplings at the nurseries of the Ministry of Agriculture are ready for plantation on Arbor Day, which falls in the middle of next month, according to Ministry Secretary General Ghaleb Abu Orabi Friday.

The main tree-planting celebration is expected to take place at the newly-opened Hashemite University in Zarqa where thousands of trees will be planted on the occasion, Mr. Abu Orabi said.

He said the ministry is in contact with governors of various regions to organise celebrations in their respective areas as well.

Mr. Abu Orabi said departments of agriculture will be distributing fruit and forest trees to organisations, individuals and farmers.

The ministry's nurseries have together

produced 7.5 million saplings this year and no less than four million of them will be planted in the current agricultural season, he added.

The ministry is also preparing to plant at least one million fruit trees in the Yarmouk River basin in northern Jordan on 1,000 dunums of land, he said.

The Ministry is currently implementing a programme for developing pasture lands with a view to increasing the country's livestock.

Jordan produces only 35 per cent of local requirements of red meat and the balance is made up through imports.

According to the secretary-general, Jordan has reached self-sufficiency in poultry needs while the country's production of table eggs has been in surplus for several years.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Touq to chair training meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Administrative Development Muhieddin Touq will chair a meeting for the Institute of Public Administration's (IPA) board of directors on Sunday. During the meeting they will discuss the IPA's training project for 1996. IPA Director General Shihadeh Abu Baqar said the project will be circulated to all government ministries and departments before the end of this year for their input to the training programmes.

Agricultural exports up

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) last month exported JD 5,721,000 worth of vegetables to Arab and foreign markets, according to AMC sources. Among the major importers of the Jordanian agricultural exports were the United Arab Emirates with 40.6 per cent of the total Jordanian exports, followed by Saudi Arabia with 25.9 per cent, Bahrain 20 per cent, Qatar 9.5 per cent, Lebanon 2.8 per cent, and Oman 2 per cent. Sources said exports of vegetables for Nov. 1995 represented an increase of 8,249 tonnes over last year's exports during the same month.

Sahab man dies at 130

Amman (J.T.) — A 130-year-old man died in Sahab Thursday leaving behind 20 sons and daughters, the youngest of whom is 25 years old, and some 300 grandsons and daughters, according to a report in Al Rai Arabic daily.

He married his third wife at the age of 80.

He was a veteran of the Great Arab Revolt, led by Sharif Hussein Ben Ali.

Haj Mohammad has never used eyeglasses nor hearing aids, his family said.

He was interviewed several times by Jordan Television and other local and Arab newspapers.

CONCERT

* Concert by the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8.00 p.m.

SEMINAR

* Seminar on the artistic experience of Ismail Shammout by Abdul Raouf Sham'oun (accompanied by a slide show) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6.00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Bawadi's "Season Of Joy" exhibition, a collection of rugs and ceramics, at the National Ceramics Centre, Khaldi from 9.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. Tel. 825241, 834688. (Until Dec.12)

* Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Jan. 4).

* Paintings by a German artist group at the Orthodox club, Abdoun.

* Photography exhibition "Biblical Itineraries" at the French Cultural Centre. (Until Dec. 30).

CHRISTMAS SALE

* Gifts and crafts by Suha Lallas Kassissieh (includes Christmas items, table mats, baskets, wall-hangings, candle-holders and side-lamps) at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (until Dec. 31).

'Special status' for Chechenya not enough to satisfy rebels

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and the pro-Moscow Chechen authorities signed an accord here Friday confirming a "special status" for Chechenya within the Russian Federation which fell short of separatist demands for independence.

The four-page accord was signed by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the head of the pro-Russian Chechen Administration Doku Zavgayev and President Boris Yeltsin's special representative in Chechenya, Oleg Lobov.

It recognised "the need for a special status for the Chechen Republic within the Russian Federation."

Mr. Zavgayev said the accord, "on the fundamental principles of relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic," gave Chechenya relative autonomy in economic and cultural matters and was a step towards a full power-sharing treaty.

He said such a treaty would be signed once a Chechen parliament was elected and a constitution adopted. Interfax News Agency reported.

Mr. Zavgayev is one of four candidates in Chechen leadership elections set for Dec. 17, which have been condemned by separatists loyal to independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Elections to the Russian State Duma are due to be held the same day in Chechenya.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said the accord was similar to previous agreements between the federal authorities and 12 other subjects of the federation, which grant them varying degrees of autonomy from Moscow.

Russia has 89 subject regions and republics. The accord stressed both "the universally recognised peoples' rights to self-determination" and "the preservation of (Russian) territorial integrity and economic space."

Chechens in the Caucasus republic's war-ravaged capital Grozny Friday immediately denounced the accord, saying it had no legitimate basis.

"Any agreements or treaties should be signed only after public discussion," said Imran Dokshukayev, a spokesman for former Russian parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, who is Mr. Zavgayev's main opponent in the Dec. 17 elections.

"There is no basis for recognising such a document," Doku Zavgayev said. "We have no legitimate authority to sign a document on the official status of the republic," Mr. Dokshukayev said.

Mr. Khasbulatov has proposed his own draft for a treaty that calls for dual citizenship and does not refer to Chechenya as a "subject of the Russian Federation" — a term that Moscow has insisted on in all negotiations with Chechen separatists.

Bella Abdurakhmanova, 56, a Dudayev supporter, told AFP: "We have our own president, Dudayev, and our own constitution, and the new accord 'doesn't change a thing.'"

Under the accord, Chechenya is allowed to "take part in international relations" and develop foreign economic ties.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said it was fully in line with the Russian constitution.

However, the business daily Kommersant said Friday the constitution "does not refer to any special status," and "to reach such a compromise with Chechenya, either the constitution must be changed or a corresponding law must be adopted."

Alexander Golts, an observer with the Russian Armed Forces daily Krasnaya Zvezda, told AFP the accord was aimed at "bringing Chechenya within a legal framework."

But Stanislav Govorukhin, head of the Duma commission investigating the origins of the

Chechenya war, told Moscow Echo radio the accord "goes against Russia's interests ... legitimising the criminal hole through which money and oil will disappear."

Between 30,000 and 50,000 people are estimated to have died in six months of bitter fighting between December last year, when Russian forces marched in to put down Mr. Dudayev's three-year-old independence drive, and a shaky ceasefire agreed on in late June.

Several of Mr. Dudayev's field commanders have threatened to use violence to disrupt the Dec. 17 elections.

Mr. Khasbulatov has also called the polls premature and charged they are likely to be rigged in favour of Mr. Zavgayev, the former speaker of the soviet-era Chechen-Ingush parliament.

A car bomb near Mr. Zavgayev's government building Monday killed at least 11 people and wounded 60.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has mediated in the peace negotiations, said it would not attempt to observe the elections because of safety concerns.



Local residents and onlookers watch the rescue works at a passenger plane's wreck near Nakhichevan city, Azerbaijan. The plane crashed in the Azeri enclave of Nakhichevan, between Turkey and Armenia, killing 51 passengers and injuring several others (AFP photo)

Search resumes for Russian plane with 100 people aboard

MOSCOW (R) — Helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft and ships combined at first light Friday in an increasingly desperate search for a Russian airliner that disappeared early Thursday with almost 100 people on board.

"We were given the task to find the plane today," a Far Eastern official of the Emergency Ministry told Russian Television.

He said eight helicopters from his ministry and the Pacific Fleet, backed by military and rescue and fishing ships, were taking part in the land and sea search in Russia's Far East.

Most reports said there were 89 passengers and eight crew aboard the three-engine 154-seat TU-154 airliner, which was operated by Khabarovsk Airlines, a splinter operation created when the domestic side of Aeroflot was broken up.

Interfax News Agency said Thursday that the airliner had probably gone down on land somewhere along the shore of the Tatar Strait, although other reports suggested it might have plunged into the Sea of Japan.

Heavy snow and poor visibility have hampered search efforts and officials held out little hope of finding survivors.

"I cannot imagine that the

passengers or crew had any chance," Moscow-based Russian Air Traffic Control chief Dmitry Polkanov said Thursday. "According to our information from Khabarovsk, I can confirm that the plane has crashed."

Russia's independent NTV television said all passengers and crew members aboard the TU-154 airliner were killed but there was no independent confirmation.

The aircraft took off from Sakhalin Island Wednesday bound for the city of Khabarovsk, an hour away on the Russian mainland, and vanished from radar screens soon afterwards in freezing conditions. Khabarovsk is seven time zones and 9,000 kilometres east of Moscow.

Interfax and TASS news agencies quoted officials as saying the TU-154 had been in service since 1976 and had flown more than 30,000 hours.

Interfax said that, unlike more modern aircraft, the airliner did not have an automatic radio unit that would transmit its position. This made the search more difficult.

Interfax said residents of the Tatar Strait coastal area told the local emergency centre in Khabarovsk that they heard a roar of jet engines early Thursday.

The Khabarovsk official said the search would resume at first light. "We will start the search again early Friday morning, whatever the weather," he said by phone. "But we have not been able to locate any trace of the crashed plane today."

The disappearance of the plane, days after two fatal crashes in the Transcaucasus Republic of Azerbaijan, has revived concern about air safety in the former Soviet Union.

"In 1988-1994 the air safety situation has worsened," said Alexander Neradko, who heads a department which investigates air accidents in Russia.

"If we look at the notorious (year of) 1994, the level of air safety in Russia was about 2.5 times lower than an average safety level in the International Civil Aviation Organisation," he told NTV television.

A total of 302 people died in air crashes in Russia in 1994, up from 222 the previous year.

A total of 49 people were killed and 33 injured Tuesday when a twin-engine TU-134 crashed shortly after take-off from Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan enclave. A government commission said the engines had probably failed.

Beijing elders warn of disco saturation

BEIJING (AFP) — Beijing's Cultural Affairs Bureau has called for a halt to the construction of new discotheques in the Chinese capital, warning that the market is already saturated. Since Beijing's first luxury disco, JJS, opened in December last year, another seven state-of-the-art night clubs have set up business and four or five are currently under construction. "In fact, among the eight that have already opened, only two or three are profitable," a bureau spokesman was quoted as saying by the Beijing Daily Friday. With most discos selling a maximum of three hundred 50-yuan (\$6) tickets per night, costly overheads are leaving them with meagre profits of several thousand yuan, the newspaper said. One of the largest discos, Nasa, used to pack in well over 1,000 punters a night in its first six months of operations, but is now lucky to pull in two hundred, reflecting an excess of competition, the bureau said.

Bang on the head cures united fan

LONDON (R) — A bang on the head courtesy of Manchester United has cured 10-year-old Vicky Wilmore and baffled experts. Doctors and teachers were stunned when United fan Vicky mysteriously and suddenly started reading and writing backwards a year ago, the Times newspaper reported. Then, watching United on TV losing a first round UEFA Cup tie with Rotor Volgograd in September, she slumped in her chair in disappointment and fell back, cracking her head on a table. Her mother Brenda Wilmore said: "Next day at school the teachers discovered Vicky was writing normally again." United Secretary Ken Mattett told Thursday's Times newspaper: "We are delighted she has made a recovery. It was a bad day for us, but it is nice to know something good came of it."

Judge Ito delivers timely sense of humor

LOS ANGELES (R) — Judge Lance Ito was in a serious mood for much of the O.J. Simpson double-murder trial, but now comes a glimpse of the humorous side of America's most famous judge. Daily Variety newspaper reported that Judge Ito has sent out holiday cards featuring a photo of himself on the bench, face buried in his hands, above the caption: "objection overruled, Mr. Cochran. White Christmas does not have racist overtones," the reference is to Simpson's lawyer Johnnie Cochran, who several times during the nine-month trial raised the issue of race. Judge Ito, who is on vacation, could not be reached for comment.

Michael Jackson to spend several days in hospital

NEW YORK (R) — Pop star Michael Jackson may have collapsed from a heart problem combined with dehydration and was in "serious but stable condition" in a New York hospital, his doctors said. Jackson, 37, was in the intensive care unit being treated for inflammation of the stomach and intestines, kidney and liver function, a statement by the Beth Israel North Hospital in Manhattan said. Jackson was rehearsing Wednesday at the Beacon Theatre in Manhattan for a Home Box Office (HBO) cable television special when he fainted and was taken to a hospital by ambulance with "dangerously low" blood pressure and dehydration.

Poll: Americans favour peacekeeping

UNITED NATIONS (R) — While congressional leaders in both parties assume the American public adamantly opposes the United Nations, a new opinion poll showed strong support for the world body, including peacekeeping.

The poll by the Winthrop Group for the United Nations Association of the United States gave the U.N. an overall positive performance rating of 54 per cent compared to 45 per cent in 1992. Women and blacks were among the U.N.'s strongest supporters.

"The survey shows that the American public is remarkably upbeat about the importance of the United Nations and even more surprisingly about its recent performance," said Jeffrey Laurenti, executive director of the association, a private group that supports the United Nations.

Even U.S. participation in peacekeeping ranked 50 per cent for intervention in Bosnia compared to 17 per cent for joining NATO if it were to "enforce" the peace and 25 per cent against organised international presence abroad.

But 41 per cent chose a NATO enforcement opera-

tion in Bosnia as the second best option to U.N. peacekeeping. In answer to another question, the poll showed 70 per cent in favour of U.S. troops participating in U.N. peacekeeping.

On payment of the U.S. debt to the United Nations, the poll found 2-1 agreeing that the United States should pay its dues to the United Nations.

Washington now owes \$1.2 billion for dues and peacekeeping ventures. Asked how they would vote if a member of Congress opposed paying U.S. dues to the United Nations, some 30 per cent of those polled, most of them younger voters, said it would affect their vote while 46 per cent said it would make no difference in re-electing the legislator.

But there was less support for spending more money on the United Nations, with 37 per cent saying the United States was spending about the right amount and 37 per cent saying it should spend more.

Asked specifically about which U.N. Projects they supported most, the survey showed backing for stopping disease, controlling

narcotics, protecting the environment and increasing food production and population control.

But development aid to poor countries and promotion of democracy programmes were not very popular.

A plurality of the respondents, 30 per cent, approved of the job Secretary-General Boutros Ghali was doing compared to 22 per cent who did not and nearly half who had no opinion.

But a resounding 71 per cent said they would oppose any legislation for the United States to withdraw completely from the United Nations, while 22 per cent were in favour and seven per cent had no opinion.

"These findings suggest that America's political leaders need not be timid about supporting the United Nations," said John Whitehead, chairman of UN-USA.

"It is the politicians who have been tiding anti-U.N. bandwagons who may find themselves in for a jolt."

The survey conducted last weekend included a telephone poll of 1,007 people from all regions and had a 3 per cent margin of error.

U.N., U.S. blasted for rights performance

WASHINGTON (R) — The United Nations, its secretary general, its high commissioner for human rights and the United States are among those faulted for human rights failures in 1995 by a prominent activist group.

Human Rights Watch, in its annual report, leveled scathing criticism on U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, charging he has "grievously failed to uphold" long-standing U.N. vows to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It gave the United States credit for ensuring war criminals were not granted amnesty as part of the Bosnia peace accord initiated in Dayton, Ohio, last month.

But Washington was faulted for undermining establishment of a permanent international criminal court and, along with other Western governments, for devaluing human rights in pursuit of trade and investment with repressive regimes.

The United Nations decried the report as "irresponsible," while the State Department asserted the United States has nothing to feel ashamed about because "it is the one country in the world that is the absolute champion of human rights."

The report, more than 300 pages long, said the past year had proved "the market is not an automatic guarantor of human rights," as U.S. and other leaders assert.

China especially "proved the utter bankruptcy of that belief." Human Rights Watch Executive Director Ken Roth said.

Since President Bill Clinton delinked trade benefits and China's human rights, Beijing's record has deteriorated, arresting dissidents and cutting off a regular dialogue with Washington, among other things, he told a news conference.

The group also found that while the major powers shirked their duties to promote human rights throughout most of this decade, the public has "increasingly shown itself troubled by this abdication of the human rights cause."

Galileo orbits Jupiter for 1st full day

PASADENA, Calif. (R) — The Galileo spacecraft orbited Jupiter Friday in the first full day of a two-year voyage around the giant gas planet following one of the most successful days in unmanned space exploration.

A probe launched by Galileo back in July unerringly entered Jupiter's atmosphere Thursday on an epic journey to the beginning of time.

Then Galileo's rockets fired on time and cut off at the correct moment, putting it in a near-perfect orbit around Jupiter.

"We are not only in orbit, we are in a very good orbit," a jubilant project manager William O'Neil said.

Scientists are eagerly waiting for Galileo to transmit the information gleaned by the probe on its journey into the Jovian atmosphere — information they hope will give them an insight into how the universe was formed.

Jupiter has undergone fewer changes than any other planet in the solar system, scientists say.

Although scientists have no confirmation that the probe transmitted data to Galileo, they do know that

the spacecraft's antenna locked on to the probe's transmitter.

"If we get this far, I have no doubt we will get the whole lot," said project scientist Richard Young.

Scientists expect to receive the first 43 minutes of data from the probe between Sunday and Wednesday. Galileo will start transmitting pictures in late spring or early summer.

"Is this a great day or what?" National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Administrator Daniel Golden asked the Galileo team from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

"I am so proud of this NASA team," he said. "They stuck with it. They had all sorts of problems to deal with and they never gave up."

Mr. Golden said he would sleep "very well" after a day of spectacular triumphs. "I tried to be calm all day but it was very difficult," he added.

Mr. O'Neil, who has nursed Galileo like a baby on its 2.3-billion-mile (3.7-billion-kilometre) journey to Jupiter, said, "It's been a perfect day, but one that was very hard-earned."

The announcement that Galileo had gone into orbit came at 9:08 p.m. est Thursday (0208 GMT Friday), with the announcement that the spacecraft had completed its planned 49-minute engine burn.

Galileo, named after the Italian astronomer who discovered Jupiter's four largest moons in 1610, will orbit Jupiter for two years and have close encounters with three of the planet's 16 moons — Ganymede, Callisto and Europa.

After two years, it will be unable to sustain its orbit and will fall into Jupiter's atmosphere and burn up.

The Galileo Control Room burst into clapping and cheering when the day's first success, that of the probe, was announced with the words "we got it" at 6:12 p.m. est (2312 GMT), confirming that Galileo had linked up with the space probe as it entered the Jovian atmosphere.

When Galileo fired its engines for a 49-second burn, it signalled an end to its 75-minute contact with the probe.

The spacecraft was launched from the space shuttle Atlantis on Oct. 18, 1989.

Japan tightens controls over religious groups

SYO (AFP) — The Japanese parliament Friday enacted a controversial bill tightening controls over religious groups in the wake of a series of alleged abuses by the doomsday Aum Supreme Truth.

The bill was approved at a special session of the upper house of the Diet, with a majority vote of 153 to 107, after the three ruling parties — the Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party and New Komeito — backed the Japan Communist Party.

The main opposition New Komeito Party, supported by powerful Buddhist monks, had previously opposed the bill, but after the first of a series of revisions, the bill was passed.

The new law provides for the scrutiny of religious records of religious groups and will enable the government to investigate members of government agencies. Religious groups rating in more than one category will be placed under the supervision of the government rather than local authorities.

Police investigations into the Aum Supreme Truth, which used of killing 11 and injured thousands in a gas attack in the Tokyo subway in March, have severely hampered the old law.

The ruling parties initially tried to use the upper house to summon Daisaku Ikeda, the honorary president of Soka Gakkai. But owing to unruly clashes in the New Frontier Party, the upper house last week decided to seek testimony when parliament resumes in January.

Soka Gakkai is among the religious groups which are extremely rich, enjoying numerous privileges including tax exemptions. Claiming a membership of 8.12 million, Soka Gakkai runs its own university and has a daily newspaper with a circulation of 5.5 million.

The Buddhist group is, however, a key backer of the New Frontier Party, and a year ago by a up of neo-conservative opposition parties. These

include the Clean Government Party, known as Komeito, which Mr. Ikeda himself helped set up in 1964, four years after he became Soka Gakkai president.

Soka Gakkai, however, severed its organisational ties with Komeito in 1970, in keeping with the spirit of Japan's post-war constitution which is supposed to prevent religious groups from exercising political authority.

The ruling coalition reportedly plans a further review of the regulations on religious groups in January, especially in the area of tax breaks and establishing clear rules on their involvement in political activities.

Education Minister Yoshinobu Shimamura, whose ministry will supervise large religious groups under the revised law, hinted at further revisions at a news conference Friday after the bill was passed.

The bill was originally submitted to parliament on Oct. 17, and was passed by the lower house on Nov. 13.

Public support for the bill was 72 per cent, according to a poll published by the Mainichi Shimbun. The poll found that 20 per cent had no opinion about the legislation while only six per cent opposed the new law.

Reactions to the passage of the bill were mixed Friday.

"The revision reflects the views of the majority of Japanese people, and we accept it solemnly," the Association of Shinto Shrines said.

But Soka Gakkai condemned the new law. "The government and ruling coalition have used religious freedom, a human rights issue, as a political tool. We cannot understand and regret the revision," it said.

The National Christian Council of 34 Christian groups was also critical, noting that the revision "ignored the historical fact that the religious law was enacted amid regrets over the wartime religious law" which stipulated Shinto as the state religion and cracked down on other religious groups.

Canada faces possibility of losing Quebec

TAWA (R) — Only a month after Canada narrowly survived a secessionist bid by Quebec, some politicians and commentators are beginning to wonder if the terms for possible separation.

Canada's third party, the Reform Party, is taking the time in discussing this formerly taboo subject but commentators have pressed the case for separating the country and leaving Quebecers more aware of negative consequences.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien drew scathing criticism for virtually ignoring Oct. 30 separatist referendum until polls showed secessionists might win, many analysts suggested there had been no contingency plan in case of a secession.

The rest of Canada was "ill-prepared," influential Globe and Mail columnist Jeffrey Simpson said this week.

The rest of Canada only needs to work on a B, whose main objective would be to ensure that the rest of Canada never finds itself ill-prepared for dismemberment," he said.

Canada prides itself on a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Most of the population finds it difficult to imagine a hole more than twice the size of the hole in the middle.

But given the stubborn determination of separatists to keep on trying, Canadians are now being told to eventually lose the French-speaking province.

Reform leader Preston Manning, who could soon head the parliamentary opposition, thinks that talking about the issue openly could convince Quebecers that they would suffer by breaking away.

"By the federal government not saying anything on this, they created a vacuum which was filled by the separatists," he told a news conference Thursday.

Saying the separatists raised false and unrealistic possibilities, Mr. Manning added: "It's far better to fill that vacuum with realism."

A paper produced by Mr. Manning's party makes some bold suggestions, for example that Quebec should lose areas where the majority wants to stay in Canada.

That could mean Quebec's losing its vast northern two-thirds, where native peoples voted heavily against separation.

Under this scenario, Quebec would also probably lose areas that include the hull region opposite Ottawa and even Montreal, the province's largest city and economic powerhouse.

"If the boundaries of Canada are not inviolate, there is no way you could establish that the borders of Quebec are inviolate," Mr. Manning said.

The reform document also says dual Canadian-Quebec citizenship would not be possible, and that any Quebecers who wanted to stay in Canada would have to relocate or petition to have their region stay in the federation.

On the crucial subject of debt, Reform says it must be divided up strictly according to Quebec's share of the population.



Lee Jong-Koo, former defence minister under jailed former President Roh Tae-Woo, enters the prosecutor general's office in Seoul Friday for questioning (AFP photo)

S.Korea probes warplane deal, Roh's assets frozen

SEOUL (R) — A South Korean court froze former President Roh Tae-Woo's assets Friday as prosecutors investigating kickbacks grilled him and an ex-defence minister over a multi-billion dollar U.S. warplane purchase.

Prosecutors have been examining a decision during Mr. Roh's term to buy 120 F-16s from General Dynamics, reversing a plan to buy F-18s from McDonnell Douglas.

General Dynamics was mostly acquired in 1992 by Lockheed Corp, which merged with Martin Marietta this year to form Lockheed Martin. Kim Yong-Ho, vice president for the Seoul office of Lockheed Martin, denied any wrongdoing.

"We have not been involved in any unethical or illegal business in connection with the contract," Mr. Kim, who headed General Dynamics in Seoul at the time, said by telephone.

"We will actively cooperate with prosecutors' investigations in the hope the whole truth will be revealed."

Mr. Kim said he had received no summons from prosecutors. "But it is likely that they will soon call me in and I hope they do so. I will tell them everything about the contract."

An official with the Seoul District Criminal Court said an order was issued freezing Mr. Roh's property rights and bank accounts unearched by prosecutors.

Mr. Roh, who along with seven chairmen of major corporations was indicted Tuesday on bribery charges, owns a Seoul mansion and has other real estate investments. He has confessed to amassing a \$654 million slush fund during his 1988-93 term in office.

Prosecutors have charged Mr. Roh with accepting bribes worth \$369 million.

Mr. Lee Jong-Koo and another former defence minister, Lee Sang-Hoon, as well as one-time air force chief Han Chu-Sok, were among five retired military men banned Tuesday from foreign travel in connection with the probe into the arms build-up, codenamed "Yulgok".

The two Lees and Mr. Han, all ex-generals, served under Mr. Roh.

Both defence ministers were arrested in 1993 on charges of taking bribes linked to other defence purchases but were released six months later after receiving suspended sentences.

Seoul parades spy as army goes on higher alert

SEOUL (R) — South Korea paraded a captured North Korean spy Friday as its military went on higher alert over fears that Pyongyang may be tempted to make mischief because of political turmoil in Seoul and its own food crisis.

His eyes cast down and speaking in a dull monotone, 33-year-old agent Kim Dong-Shik said his mission when he was caught in October was to bring home two Pyongyang agents.

He said he had successfully accomplished a similar mission in 1990. Mr. Kim is being held for interrogation by the Agency for National Security Planning (NSP).

He was captured after a shootout with security forces in the southern hills. His companion escaped the gunfight with a minor flesh wound but was killed in a second clash with troops and police several days later after a massive man-

hunt.

Mr. Kim said he had contacted seven activists, including Huh In-Hoi, a member of the main opposition National Congress for New Politics, during his second trip. Mr. Huh was arrested and detained as a result of that contact.

"I contacted seven people. They did not seem to be surprised when I disclosed my identity," Mr. Kim said.

Two of the others have been arrested without detention, one is under investigation and no action was taken against the other three because they reported their contacts with Mr. Kim, an NSP spokesman said.

Authorities displayed at the news conference all the spy paraphernalia Mr. Kim and his companion brought with them, including a pistol fitted with a silencer, maps, a pen-shaped poison dart and a pocket knife.

Sri Lanka launches war and peace drive to tame rebels

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga Friday announced a carrot-and-stick policy to tame Tamil rebels with a new military campaign while pressing ahead with political reforms to restore ethnic peace.

A fresh offensive will be launched soon to secure a land route to the northern Jaffna peninsula to start rebuilding the region's main town wrested from Tiger rebels earlier this week, Mrs. Kumaratunga told reporters here.

"We will open a land route to Jaffna (peninsula) the same way we took Jaffna town", Mrs. Kumaratunga said at her first press conference after the military's 50-day battle against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Defence officials said establishing the crucial main supply route through 90 kilometres of highway currently under rebel control would require another 10,000 men and that recruitment had already started.

Mrs. Kumaratunga ruled out talks with the LTTE but said she was keen to implement her Aug. 3 devolution package aimed at granting greater autonomy to minority Tamils and ending the conflict which has claimed more than 50,000 lives.

The president said there had been no formal response to her amnesty offer to the LTTE which abruptly pulled out of six months of peace talks in April to resume the bitter separatist war.

"We don't want to eliminate anyone," she said. "But if they don't fall in line, they leave us with no option. We are capable of destroying them if they wish us to."

She said the LTTE had become the world's deadliest guerrilla group thanks to funding from successive Sri Lankan governments which maintained a facade of control over Jaffna by signing pay cheques for non-existent public servants.

"We don't intend to carry

on this joke any more." Mrs. Kumaratunga said adding that LTTE combatants had been drawing salaries by presenting forged papers to public servants whose "body and soul" was controlled by the rebels.

With the army restoring Colombo's writ over Jaffna for the first time in a decade, all public servants in the region will have to physically present themselves to receive their monthly salaries, Mrs. Kumaratunga said.

She said the government also planned a major rehabilitation drive to win back some 100,000 Tamil civilians who fled the 50-day Jaffna offensive which claimed 2,500 lives on both sides.

Mrs. Kumaratunga declined to say when the new operation would be launched against the LTTE but stressed it was essential to initiate her reconstruction effort estimated to cost at least \$1 billion (50 billion rupees).

"The government has not forgotten its commitment to the political process," said Mrs. Kumaratunga who is a member of the majority Sinhalese community. "But we have to clear up certain areas of obstacles placed by the LTTE."

Moderate Tamil parties which have been supporting Mrs. Kumaratunga's 13-month-old government had expressed fears that the fall of Jaffna, the fountain head of Tamil separatism, may blunt Colombo's desire to implement political reforms.

"That is a wrong perception," Mrs. Kumaratunga said. "In order to get the consent of the people, we had to do a lot of spadework."

The political process never stopped despite the military operations. "I know that the majority (Sinhalese) community fully supports the devolution package. I cannot tell you dates, but we are very seriously looking at it to implement it."

Mrs. Clinton, Dole to campaign in New Hampshire

CONCORD, N.H. (R) — U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Senate majority leader Bob Dole will hit the presidential campaign trail in New Hampshire Friday when they will each file presidential election papers for the crucial first primary votes of the 1996 White House race.

Mrs. Clinton will file on behalf of her husband, President Bill Clinton, for the Democratic primary, as she did in his successful 1992 presidential run.

An hour later, Sen. Dole will appear at the domed state capitol to enter his bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

Campaign officials said the two camps had been in touch and had staggered their schedules to ensure they would not meet.

Both the Democratic and Republican presidential preference votes will take place next Feb. 20 as New Hampshire upholds its tradition of staging the first primary of the presidential campaign. With only a couple of exceptions in the past 30 years, the winner of the New Hampshire primary has gone on to win his party's presidential nomination.

One of those exceptions was Mr. Clinton, who placed second in 1992 but still declared himself "the comeback kid" after surviving allegations about marital infidelity and relentless questions about how he avoided conscription for the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

Mrs. Clinton planned to begin the day visiting a penitentiary centre in the town of Portsmouth. She was expected to emphasise Mr. Clinton's opposition to Republican efforts to cut the growth of spending on the Medicare and Medicaid programmes which provide health care for the old, the poor and the chronically sick.

She then is to address students at the University of New Hampshire and end the day with a speech to Democratic activists.

Sen. Dole leads the race for the Republican nomination by a wide margin. His campaign said he would arrive in Concord from the city of Manchester 32 kilometres to the south aboard a bus, which he is calling the "balanced budget express".

This time, the president faces no serious opponent for his party's nomination, making him the first Democrat to run unopposed since then President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. But campaign officials are taking no chances.

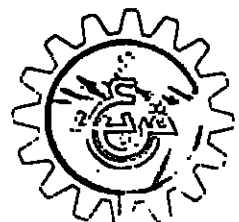
"We aim to make no mistakes. We want to put on a show of strength up here and to make a bid for the political centre," said Jake Siewert, spokesman for the Clinton campaign in New Hampshire.

Mr. Siewert said Mr. Clinton would visit the state before the primary and Mrs. Clinton would return at least one more time. Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper were also expected to campaign.

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HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

THE ARAB POTASH COMPANY LIMITED

INVITATION FOR CONTRACTORS TO TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 33KV TRANSMISSION LINES EXPANSION CONTRACT NO. APC/73/95 (PRODUCTION EXPANSION WORKS)

Suitably qualified and experienced contractors, equivalent to the Grade (1) contractors according to the Ministry of Public Works classification in the fields of electromechanical works, are invited to bid for the above works being implemented by the Arab Potash Company at Safi in the southern basin of the Dead Sea.

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The works include the design, manufacture, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of the following:

- One (1) indoor cubicle 33KV, SF6 circuit breaker, complete with protection relays.
- 33KV cables between the refinery 33KV switchboard and the new APC Township terminal pole, 250 metres long.
- One (1) new 33KV overhead transmission line between the refinery and APC Township outdoor substation, 17.5km. long.
- Re-string the existing lisan 33KV transmission line between the APC Township outdoor substation and the main brine intake pumping station on the Dead Sea, about 15km long.
- Replace all three (3) existing 33KV outdoor oil circuit breakers with SF6 type circuit breaker (1200A) at the Township outdoor substation, complete with uprated protection, metering and whatever necessary to bring this outdoor substation into full operational service for the increased load current.

2. TENDER DOCUMENTS

Tender documents are available from the Company Head Office in Shmeisani, Amman, from 07/12/1995 till 23/12/1995 against a non-refundable payment of JD 100 per copy. Tenderers will be required to submit their offers in three(3) envelopes. The first containing a tender guarantee in the amount of JD 50,000, the second containing the Technical Offer and Experience in details, and the third containing the Financial Offer. Any tender not accompanied by a tender guarantee will not be considered. Closing date for the submission of tenders to the Amman, Shmeisani offices of the Arab Potash Company Limited is 12:00 noon of January 20, 1996.

S.Hawari
Managing Director

Jordan Times

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Trouble hits GCC

THE MEMBER states of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were at their friendliest and most cohesive moment just before and during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the build-up that led to the eviction of Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

But the Gulf crisis and war that ensued showed vulnerability of the alliance and its dependence on the Western powers for defence. The collective GCC defence policy, i.e. dependence on the actual presence of foreign troops, has led to internal problems in some of the member countries — notably Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar. More recently there have been increasing indications that cracks in the stand vis-a-vis Iraq are developing in the alliance.

Independent-minded Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates seem to be discontent with the way the GCC leader, Saudi Arabia, and their ever disgruntling partner, Kuwait, are handling the post-Gulf war Arab affairs, especially their continued hardline position on Iraq.

The signs of disunity within the GCC summit this past week in Muscat could only be an omen that the alliance is heading into the same fate of its two other Arab groups, the Arab Cooperation Council (Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and Yemen) and the Maghreb Union (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya). If that happens, the Arabs would be denied their last alliance that at one point promised much hope for the Arab cause.

The onus seems to fall mainly on the shoulders of the Saudi leadership. The Saudis were and are still expected to instil a new life in joint Arab efforts, to put an end to the plight of the Iraqi people, to help push the Mideast peace process and to bring Iran into a wider Middle East region. We hope that the differences that surfaced at the GCC summit last week will soon be smoothed out and dealt with in an effective manner that would restore to the GCC its unity and to Arabs at large a fresh hope. We also expect the alliance, being the only and the richest and most influential Arab grouping, to assume a more positive role in the shaping of a new Middle East that is free of war and conflict where all peoples enjoy democracy, freedom and security.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i said that the results of the parliamentary elections in Egypt came as a real shock to the Arab masses in general and the Egyptian people in particular. The elections resulted in the death and injury of scores of people and failed to win any of the opposition groups a single seat in parliament, said Mahmoud Rimawi. Saying that all the right and left wing groups have reached the conclusion that the elections were the worst ever to be held in Egypt, the writer said that the results do not represent the real Egyptian views and the Egyptian masses. By refusing to allow international and independent observers to examine the situation, the Egyptian authorities have committed a major blunder and fuelled reports that the election results were rigged, said the writer.

URGING JOURNALISTS to oppose the proposed amendments to the Press and Publication Law, a writer in Al Dustour said the draft amendments bear seeds harmful to democracy itself. By threatening to take very drastic measures against journalists, the government is returning to methods of the old days, when there was no freedom for the press and when journalists faced imprisonment for their unfavourable writings, said Taher Adwan. It is true that there are some excesses on the part of the weekly papers but it should be noted that the majority of journalists oppose such excesses which could be dealt with through dialogue and a campaign of public awareness against ill founded reports and sensational writings and through enforcing the hand of the Jordan Press Association in dealing with such affairs. Saying that the government's excuses for introducing amendments to the law cannot convince any one, the writer said that the government is creating an impression with the public that its aims are purely political and aim at paving the ground for normalising Jordanian people's relations with Israel. The writer said that the right approach to deal with normalisation is to leave the matter to the people to decide, warning that a very long period of struggle and hostility can by no means be transformed into a honeymoon between the Arabs and the Israelis over night.

Jordanian Perspective

Moves to curb yellow press should not violate democratic principles

By Dr. Musa Keilani

IT IS heartening to note that the Jordan Press Association has launched a dialogue with the government on proposed amendments to the Press and Publications Law and the minister of information has promised that no changes to the legislation will be adopted unilaterally and that the journalistic community in the country will be consulted before any government moves in this regard.

The underlying philosophy here is quite simple: Regardless of the government's points of view and objectives concerning what is described as yellow press in the country, there should not be any digression from the democracy that we all enjoy in the process. While responsible freedom is a concept that everybody should accept, the government should also recognise that no move adopted in its anxiety to curb irresponsible freedoms should be in violation of the cherished democratic principles that Jordanians are also anxious to uphold.

As such, the proposed amendments to the Press and Publications Law should essentially be based on democratic principles and should in no way be another weapon in the hands of the executive authority to use against the press in general.

Notwithstanding the reports that have been appearing in the local press over the past three weeks, we do not yet know, to any degree of accuracy, what shape and form the proposed amendments would take. It is, however, clear that one of the changes would be the imposition of stricter penalties and perhaps jail terms for violators of the Press and Publications Law. Another reported proposal is to do away with a clause that limits government participation in the equity of any newspaper establishment to 35 per cent. It is a paradox in itself that the government owns any share in any newspaper establishment.

The government knows it and the newspapers know it that state ownership in the media only means a Damocles sword for the publication and a strong tool that the executive authority could use to "punish" it whenever and wherever it finds fit to do so.

The government equity in at least two of the mainstream papers in the country could also perhaps explain the tame approach that these newspapers have adopted in reporting despite the potential for being more true to the principles of journalism as a profession.

On the one hand, some of our weekly tabloids have been accused of sensationalising and scandalising news and going beyond the confines of responsible freedoms. On the other, our mainstream press, the Arabic-language dailies particularly, are docile and follow a distinctly pro-establishment line despite the freedoms that they have to air constructive and realistic criticism. In fact, strictly neutral and objective foreign observers have noted that the mainstream press leaves a lot to be desired in terms of their coverage of local events and political issues, opting to follow the government line and stifle dissenting voices.

Another proposed amendment, as reported in the press, is a stipulation that the chief editor of any publication should be a serving member of the Jordan Press Association for a minimum period of seven years. While no one would say it aloud, the implication is that anyone who has been a member of the JPA for seven years would be docile enough not to cross the path of the government. On the other hand, however, is an argument that seven years of membership in the JPA would also mean seven years of experience in the profession. Again, when the

very definition of a "journalist" in the country is "a member of the JPA," that does not say much either.

It is also comforting to hear that any changes to the Press and Publications Law would have no negative impact on Jordan's reputation and image abroad. But the question that comes up is: How much credibility and regard is given to the criticism that has been levelled against the current Press and Publications Law by some of the international press watchdogs, which, by and large, are the barometers of any country's reputation and image in the international scene?

But what is more worrying is the possibility that the proposed amendments would empower the government to summarily close down any local publication without having to go through the judicial process that would establish that the law had been violated in the first place. Such a provision, without doubt, is a clear digression of democracy.

If anything, such a weapon in the hands of the government would only set back the evolution of a free media in the country in the sense that the mainstream press, which is embracing the concept of responsible reporting, would only retract into itself and go back to the days when whatever the officialdom had to say was gospel.

While we could not go to the extent of saying that the proposed amendment, if implemented, would mean a return to the days of martial law, it is also quite clear that empowering the government to order summary closures of any publication in the country is somewhere near those days. Our newspapers suffered from it a lot during those days and we can do without a repetition of that experience.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Peace-building requires implementation of deals

Reviewed By Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL Arabic dailies last week focused attention on developments in the Middle East as well as domestic affairs and pan-Arab issues.

Commenting on the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres's brief visit to Amman last week, a writer in Al Ra'i said that the building of peace requires more than agreements and ink on paper but rather implementation of agreements on the ground. Quite a good number of economic projects agreed on in the Amman Economic summit between Israel and Jordan are untouched and the numerous agreements concluded between the two sides earlier remain in limbo, said Sultan Al Hattab. The writer said that Mr. Peres should not only realise that Jordan hopes to see these projects implemented but also should know that the Kingdom's concept of a comprehensive peace is linked to peace between

Israel and all the Arab parties, including Syria and Lebanon. He said the Kingdom's concept of peace hinges also on Israel's commitments to implementing agreements which help build a real peace.

Mr. Hattab's views were backed by Mohammad Kawash, a writer in Al Dustour, who said that Israel cannot build peace with the Arabs as long as it continues to resort to repression against the Arab people still under occupation. Referring to the incidents in Nabulus and Jenin, in which the Israelis used force against Arab demonstrators in the past week, the writer said that if Israel continues to behave in such repressive manner, no genuine peace can be established and rather hatred would deepen against the Israelis. The writer said that the way the Israeli forces behave in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip show clearly that

Israel has not changed its policies against people with whom it is claiming it will have peace. There must be a drastic change in the Israeli ideology towards the Arabs if peace is to endure, he demanded.

Ibrahim Al Absi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, daily, urged the wealthy Palestinians to hasten to provide funds for their brothers and sisters who are now trying to reconstruct their homeland after decades of Israeli occupation, the writer said that the people in the West Bank are enthusiastic about rebuilding Palestine but are in desperate need of funds. Saying that the Israelis have not opened a single road in the West Bank or have planted a single tree or opened a single school, the writer said that the Palestinians living abroad have a duty towards their kinsmen in the Palestine homeland and ought to help them lay the infrastructure for their institutions. The wealthy Palestinians living abroad

are reported to be holding 100 billion in cash and assets, said the writer, who said that part of these funds could be invested safely in Palestine for profit and in a manner that would help the Palestinians, who have suffered a great deal under occupation. He said that it is a historic and national duty for the Palestinians everywhere to come to the help of their kinsmen, who are trying to build their homeland.

Referring to the peace process, a writer in Al Dustour said that Syria is obviously moving faster than ever before towards reaching a settlement with Israel. Saleh Qallab said that before Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, the Syrians were delaying negotiations, probably believing that the ruling Labour Party in Israel is not strong enough to honour a peace treaty and in fact could lose the 1996 parliamentary elections and subsequently Damascus has to deal with the Likud. But now that,

Rabin has been killed by the extremists, the Labour Party's position has been strengthened, and in Damascus's views, the Labour Party could win a landslide victory in the coming elections, said the writer.

Commenting on the Ministry of Water and Irrigation's plans to raise the price of water consumed for domestic, agricultural or industrial purposes, Mohammad Subeiri said that the ministry has chosen a very inappropriate moment to make its bid.

If the government acts by the ministry's recommendations and raises the price of water, it will be committing a major blunder, prompting citizens to wonder what benefits they have gained from the free water coming to the country in implementation of the peace treaty with Israel, said the columnist in Al Dustour. Now that it is winter season there is no justification for raising the water prices and the ministry

could well wait until the mid summer when scarcity of water is normally felt to make the move, suggested the writer. Of course, said the writer, the citizens will eventually have to shoulder part of the cost, but, he said, the ministry should shoulder the major burden and could save funds for water operations through reducing the large staff of employees and through intensifying work to substitute the worn out water networks.

Taher Al Adwan, a writer in Al Dustour, tackled the question of corruption, which was lately discussed by a seminar held in Amman and said that Jordanians feel that there must be a clear-cut government policy to deal with this issue. We are in need of a national strategy to combat corruption but we first ought to define corruption and should emphasise that the nation should not punish a small employee who receives a bribe but rather punish senior officials who abuse their positions in order to mass fortunes.

The fall of Jaffna

By Gwynne Dyer

THE 50-day battle for Jaffna was not in the same league as Stalingrad, or even Sarajevo. But the fall of Sri Lanka's third largest city to government troops, after five years under rebel control, is a turning point in the biggest war raging in the world today.

The beginning of the end came on Oct. 30, when the city's outlying defences were penetrated by three Sri Lankan divisions. That night, cadres of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) moved through the city telling the population loud-speakers: "A demonic force will attack us from several directions. Since we are going to resist every inch against a state drunk with racism, you people must evacuate this same night."

So 400,000 people, having endured five years with no electricity, no telephones, few consumer goods and strictly rationed food, obediently abandoned their homes on the Jaffna peninsula and began crossing the lagoon in commandeered fishing boats to reach Tiger-controlled areas on the adjacent mainland.

Yet all was not as it seemed. For one thing, the Tigers did not defend every inch of the city. Their remarkable talent with mines and booby traps slowed the Sri Lankan army's advance so much that some parts of the deserted city are still not cleared, but military casualties on both sides were under a thousand in the final push into Jaffna. Civilian casualties were even lower.

In fact, most of the civilians killed in the past month were not members of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority at all. They were Sinhalese city-dwellers blown away by Tigers suicide-bombers in Colombo, the capital, and entire families of villagers who were slaughtered (and often disembowelled) by Tiger raiding parties infiltrating south into the Sinhalese heartland.

This Tiger response to offensives in the north is maddeningly familiar to Sri Lankans after 12 years of war and 39,000 dead. Indeed, schools were closed an entire month before the normal Christmas break because parents, knowing that the offensive would produce the usual riposte, demanded it. But some things really are different this time.

The most different thing is President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who most certainly does not head a "state drunk with racism." There was serious discrimination in the past against Sri Lanka's 3 million Tamils, only 18 per cent of the population, who differ in both language and religion from the dominant Sinhalese community. (Tamils are Hindu or Christian, Sinhalese are mostly Buddhists.) But Ms. Kumaratunga won a landslide majority a year ago on a platform of peace, and she has kept her promises.

Even the LTTE leadership, sensing their own people's warweariness, declared a ceasefire when Ms. Kumaratunga won the election. And she seized the moment, unveiling her plan to change Sri Lanka from a centralised state into a "union

of regions."

"This is the solution we promised. This is what the people expect," she said, outlining a country of eight regions, each with its own elected assembly and exclusive control over land, educational systems, even their own judiciary and police forces. In practice, therefore, the Tamils could run their own show.

Ms. Kumaratunga needs a two-thirds majority in parliament, or victory in a national referendum, to change Sri Lanka so radically. But she won 62 per cent of the popular vote in last year's election on a platform that more or less foreshadowed her plan, so she could probably get it. There was no reason for the Tigers to go on fighting. The war should have ended.

Except that then, what would the Tigers do? The dedicated young fanatics who have murdered an Indian prime minister, a Sri Lankan prime minister, and a dozen other Sri Lankan aspirants for the top job, would have no place in a peaceful Sri Lanka.

So in April, they deliberately broke the truce, even though it meant sacrificing all the international sympathy they had previously enjoyed in some quarters. Survival is now the primary issue; not the survival of the Tamils, but of the LTTE itself.

That may be why Jaffna, their capital for the past five years, fell so quietly. For ordinary Tamils, however nationalist, the ideal of an independent state of Tamil Eelam must be weighed against the practicalities of living under siege and blockade, and President

Kumaratunga's offer seems hard to refuse. So the number of people willing to die for the LTTE is declining. But it is not over. It will probably not be fully over while this generation still lives.

If President Kumaratunga herself evades the suicide-bombers, the "union of regions" formula may win over most Tamils, and a kind of peace may descend on the suffering island. But the hardcore Tigers, the men and women now in their early 30s who have carried cyanide capsules since they were teenagers — they are not going to quit. There will be large-scale terrorism in Sri Lanka for a long time to come.

Looking at the wrecked economy and the blighted lives, it's hard to believe that all this happened just because the Sinhalese majority passed a few laws removing the legal status of the Tamil language and imposing quotas (but quite generous ones) on Tamil entry into the universities and the professions.

The Sinhalese justified all this to themselves because, though they are the majority in Sri Lanka, they live next to 90 million Tamils in southern India. So they felt and acted like a threatened minority that must take harsh steps to protect itself.

The local Tamils launched mass protests, and then Sinhalese mobs started massacring innocent Tamils in Colombo, and a couple of decades later the situation has become literally insoluble. It can be contained, but it can't be fixed. There's probably a lesson in here somewhere, if you want to look for it.

Why London is a haven for world's dissidents

By Allan Ramsay

LONDON HAS long been seen as a safe haven by the world's dissidents, who can retreat into anonymity but still carry out effective long-range sniping campaigns against their home governments. Britain's traditional open-terms policy for those fleeing prosecution, its liberal democratic traditions of free speech and its position as an international communications centre make it an excellent place to regroup and plan new strategy for a political organisation on the run.

There is usually a refugee community already living here and it is easy for them to find accommodation, work — legal or otherwise — and renew contacts with other dissidents. There is also easy access to other European Union (EU) countries.

But sometimes, as with Libyan Ali Mehmet Abuzaid, the dissidents are lured into a false sense of security as time passes until they are suddenly snuffed out by hit squads, sneaked in and out of the country with false documentation.

Although the political assassination is sudden and swift, as with the famous poisoned umbrella tip attack on Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov, the victim will usually have been tracked and hunted for years or he may have been betrayed by a friend forced to give information to

save family and relations back home.

Brutal dictators like Colonel Muammar Qaddafi have long memories and cannot tolerate even long-distance criticism, so for a leader (allegedly) prepared to sanction the Lockerbie bombing, the life of a 55-year-old dissident whose only crime was to once publish an opposition underground newspaper would be nothing.

Sometimes such groups can prove to be a political embarrassment to Britain, as with Dr. Mohammad Al Massari and his Committee for Defence of Legitimate Rights, which is campaigning for political reform in Saudi Arabia.

The group publishes a samizdat newsletter which is clandestinely faxed into Saudi Arabia and which makes constant allegations of corruption and exploitation against the Saudi royal family.

Although the cell has no interest in violence it is seen as a threat in Riyadh and there is constant pressure on the British government, via a £3 billion arms deal under negotiation, to throw him out.

Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind has spent much effort trying to explain to the increasingly angry and mystified Saudis that Dr. Al Massari cannot be ejected for doing something which is perfectly legal in Britain.

Evening Standard

Features

Kabariti due in Qatar

(Continued from page 1)

head and host next year's GCC summit as scheduled. "We wish this dispute had not happened or it had been resolved in a brotherly way satisfactory to all parties," he said in a statement carried by the official Qatari News Agency.

"But regrettably, it was resolved in a way that has been unfamiliar to the council," he said.

Sheikh Hamad said Qatar as not against Saudi diplomat Jameel Al Hujilan's appointment, disagreed with procedural issues related to GCC decision-making.

Qatar regarded the appointment of a GCC chief as a central issue which, according to the group's charter, needed unanimity. The five allies — Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates — viewed it as a procedural issue which only required majority backing.

"GCC members should abide by its rules and not set precedents, because as we will inevitably reflect on the march of the GCC and its achievement of its goals," Sheikh Hamad said.

"We would have settled for any brotherly solution proposed by the council, but we saw obvious insistence to the contrary, which led us to reject so that such unhealthy phenomenon shall not be repeated."

Sheikh Hamad said Qatar would forward the name of its candidate, Ambassador Abdul Rahman Al Attiyah, more than six months ago, and Saudi Arabia named Mr. Hulan afterwards.

"We would have wished that the kingdom, which was aware of our nomination, would have asked us to withdraw."

Peres reassures Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

mentioned in our meetings that were chaired by Mr. Arafat will be respected and implemented without any hedges," he said after the meeting at an Israel-PLO liaison office near the Erez checkpoint between Israel and Gaza.

Mr. Arafat said the most important outcome of the meeting was a sense that Peres will continue on the same path that we started together to continue the peace of the brave, despite the big loss (of Rabin).

In a gesture to the Palestinians, Mr. Peres agreed to increase by 9,500 the number of Palestinian labourers from the West Bank and Gaza permitted to work in Israel. Today, some 40,000 Palestinians have work permits for Israel.

Witnesses said the violence in Nablus began when an Israeli military convoy came under attack at the entrance of Nablus' old city on Friday afternoon.

Israeli soldiers opened fire on the crowd, Talal Abu Issa, 35, was shot in the head and died on the way to the hospital. At least three stone-throwers were wounded by gunfire, hospital officials said.

The Israeli army is to withdraw from Nablus on Dec. 15 under the autonomy agreement.

Missile parts intercepted

(Continued from page 1)

porting military equipment possessing missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometres.

It was the first such announcement of the seizure of military equipment in Jordan en route to Iraq since the U.N. sanctions were imposed.

Most of Iraq's authorised imports of food and medicine pass through Aqaba, Jordan's port of entry. The seizure of gyroscopes as seen as a serious blow to Iraq's attempts to lobby for a lifting of the crippling sanctions.

"It comes at the worst time for Iraq which is preparing to send its Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to plead at the United Nations for a lifting of the embargo," an Arab diplomat said AFP.

Mr. Aziz is to visit Amman on Sunday on his way to New York. UNSCOM chairman Rolf Eide said in October that Iraq had misled his inspectors about its weapons stockpiles, and may still have chemical and biological warheads as well as components to con-

draw in the favour of its nominee," the emir said. "It would have been easier for us to respond to the request of our Saudi brothers."

A Doha-based diplomat was quoted as saying by Reuters:

"The Qataris are upset... There has been deviation from the rule of unanimity. If you (GCC) can do this now, it could happen with something bigger and more important."

Qatar backed all other points in the summit's declaration, including tougher than expected anti-Iraq language — signalling its commitment to overall GCC policies.

But even on that issue it lost to the Saudis and other conservatives who dropped Qatar's attempt to insert a clause promising humanitarian aid to Iraq's sanctions-hit population.

"In the past there was no (declared) evidence, now I can say and clearly see they (Gulf Arab states) have many problems," said a senior Muscat-based diplomat who attended the summit's closing ceremonies on Wednesday.

The Oman summit was supposed to take the GCC into a new era with agreements on some of its nagging border disputes, trade, security, and other issues.

"It was supposed to finally lead to the start of real integration but the Qatari bomb has sent the GCC back to the pre-coordination phase," said the diplomat quoted by Reuters.

Again the summit referred the issue of unifying customs duties, a main European Union request to forge a free trade accord and achieve a GCC common market, to the ministerial level to find an agreement able to win a required unanimity by the leaders.

Good news for the Palestinian Authority

By Graham Usher

ONE MONTH after Yigal Amir shot dead Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's new prime minister, Shimon Peres, has consolidated his leadership by signalling continuity with his predecessor's policies as well as hinting at subtle changes of emphasis. On Nov. 22, the Knesset approved Mr. Peres' new government, which saw former army chief (and Rabin loyalist) Ehud Barak appointed as foreign minister and the reentry into the government's fold of former Labour dissident Haim Ramon as interior minister.

Mr. Peres has also said that he seeks a "comprehensive peace" with Syria and Lebanon, and has assured PLO Leader Yasser Arafat that Israel will hold to its commitments regarding redeployment in the West Bank and Palestinian elections. Such stances are in tune with current Israeli public opinion, with polls registering a massive 73 per cent in support of the peace process compared with 55 per cent prior to Rabin's assassination.

This is good news for Mr. Arafat and his Palestinian Authority (PA), since both are wholly dependent on Israeli goodwill for any progress towards Palestinian self-government. And,

so far, Mr. Peres has been as good as his word.

On Nov. 13, the last Israeli troops left Jenin, making it the first West Bank town (after Jericho) to be transferred to PA control. This is in line with the PLO-Israeli agreement signed in Taba in September. More remarkably — given the stalled pace of the "Palestinian track" hitherto — Jenin's redeployment actually occurred ahead of schedule. Redeployments from the Palestinian cities of Tulkarm, Qalqilya and Nablus are now continuing apace with all three evacuations due to be finished by Dec. 18. Israeli military officers have also said that the army should be out of Bethlehem by Dec. 9 to enable "Arafat to spend Christmas in the holy land."

Such acceleration has little to do with seasonal good cheer, however. Mr. Peres (with solid U.S. and international backing) wants Mr. Arafat and the PA firmly installed in the West Bank ahead of the Israeli elections in November 1996 to ensure that, whatever the outcome of that vote, the Oslo peace agreement will stay. The message appears to be sinking in, even among the most die-hard of Israel's Oslo rejectionists. "We still do not support the

Oslo accords," says the leader of the rightist National Religious Party, Ze'evulun Hammer, "but we have come to the realisation that we shall never return to Jenin and Jericho." Mr. Peres is currently in intensive discussions with the NRP to bring it into his ruling coalition, cementing a possible "renewal of the historic alliance between the religious camp and Labour," in the words of Labour's secretary-general Nissim Zivili.

For Palestinians in the occupied territories, such manoeuvrings mean that the hitherto distant prospect of PA elections — slated to be held on Jan. 20, 1996 — are now an imminent fact. It is a new reality that has triggered enthusiasm on the Palestinian street, but trepidation in the ranks of the PLO and the Islamist opposition to Oslo.

An official from the PA's election committee says that of the 1.2 million Palestinians from Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem eligible vote, 600,000 had registered their names by Nov. 19. Other Palestinian sources say there are now around 1,500 nominations for the 82-member Palestinian Council, the "authorised" Palestinian self-governing body for Oslo's

interim period. However divergent Palestinian opinion may be about the Oslo process, most Palestinians, it appears, want some kind of say in it.

Mr. Arafat wants this too, since any popular vote for the council underscores both its legitimacy and his rule. It is also clear that, whatever the eventual percentages, Mr. Arafat's Fatah movement will emerge from the elections as the dominant political force in Palestinian society. This is not just because Fatah registers consistently between 40-45 per cent support in current polls (as compared with its nearest rival, the Islamist Hamas movement, which polls around 19 per cent). It is also to do with the electoral system devised by Mr. Arafat and the PA.

The 82 members of council are to be elected in 16 districts in the West Bank and Gaza on a first-past-the-post system, virtually ensuring that any majoritarian party (like Fatah) will garner the bulk of the seats. The electoral system was drawn up unilaterally by the PA and Fatah activists without referendum or discussion. And it has infuriated all shades of the Palestinian opposition.

"Because it is based on a system of majority rule, and

not proportional representation, the system will effectively exclude a large number of popular political forces from participating," says West Bank's Islamist leader, Jamal Salim. The PLO secularist opposition agrees. "It will foster tribalism, minimising what the elections should be focused on, namely democratic political programmes," says Abdul Latif Geith, a leader of the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

It is dissatisfaction with the PA's electoral law — as much as political opposition to Oslo — that has hardened both the Islamists' and the PLO dissidents' decision to boycott the January elections. But it is a stance fraught with self-doubt.

Both Hamas and the PFLP have issued statements urging Palestinians to abstain from voting. But they have also called on their own supporters to register on the electoral roll, largely because the same franchise will be used for the Palestinian municipal elections due to be held in June 1996. In Gaza, a "new" Islamist political party has been formed, the National Islamic Salvation Party (NISF). This formally has no association with Hamas, say Hamas offi-

cials. But its founding members are well-known Hamas activists in the Strip. The Islamists are thus playing both ends against middle — preserving an ideological rejectionism as Hamas, but wanting to exploit any political space opened up by elections as the NISF.

No similar subtlety characterises the PFLP. On Nov. 14, a statement issued by its "central unified command" in Gaza declared that it would not participate in any self-rule elections since "they serve only Israel's interests." The statement, say sources, was imposed by the PFLP's Damascus-based leadership, despite resistance from elements of the PFLP's Gaza leadership who have urged participation. Such schisms are likely to ensure that Fatah will stand as the uncontested, nationalist party in the elections. Even more sadly, they are bound to fragment further what was once a vibrant leftist movement in the occupied territories, but which now garners less than 6 per cent support. "How can we criticise the PA for its lack of democracy when we don't practise it ourselves," says Gaza PFLP leader Ghazi Abu Jiah.

New Statesman and Society

Rwanda's genocide tribunal slowly gets into gear

By Nicholas Kotch

Reuters

NAIROBI — In the month the world marked the 50th anniversary of the Nuremberg war crimes trials, a court set up to judge the ringleaders of another holocaust — Rwanda's genocide — finally got down to business.

Judge Richard Goldstone signed the first indictments in November against Rwandans accused of plotting and leading the massacre of up to one million of their own people.

The names of the first suspects will be made public on Dec. 12 in Arusha in northern Tanzania where the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) will sit.

That ceremony will lessen if not dispel the fears — and the hopes — of those who said the tribunal would never get going.

"We are giving priority to going after people who were in positions of lead-

ership, whether political or military," Mr. Goldstone, a South African and the tribunal's chief prosecutor, told Reuters in the Kenyan capital.

"The most guilty in our view are the people who were in leadership positions, who either gave orders leading to these atrocities being committed — mass killings, mass rapes — or who were in a position of control, who knew what was going to happen and took no steps to prevent it."

Survivors of the genocide, in which minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus were put to death by Hutu troops, militia and mobs between April and June last year, have accused the world community of dragging its feet. Implicit in the accusation is that African lives are deemed unworthy of posthumous justice.

The latest timetable says the first trials will start by April next year. The tribunal was set up by the U.N. Security Council in November, 1994.

Mr. Goldstone conceded there had been "bureaucratic delays" of some months caused by U.N. financial problems.

Many in the majority Hutu community hope the tribunal will never start. Like many Germans after World War II, they portray the process as "the justice of the winners."

Two million Hutus are refugees, having fled advancing Tutsi rebels who stepped up the civil war as the scale of the massacres became known.

The ringleaders hunted by Mr. Goldstone and his team for a year are overwhelmingly Hutu. Hutu who launched the mass killings within hours of the assassination of Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana. Who actually killed Mr. Habyarimana has not been established but some Western analysts suspect he was murdered by his own entourage.

They are unapologetic

and challenge the use of the word genocide. They accuse the former Tutsi rebels, now the masters of Kigali, of similar atrocities against Hutus before 1994.

"(That) seems to me no reason not to do justice sooner rather than later," Mr. Goldstone replied.

"The only way to break cycles of violence that have plagued a country like Rwanda for decades, and I know of no other way, is to bring people to book who were responsible for them. One has to start somewhere. The alternative is to say that this country is doomed to continue with its cycle of violence forever and the international community can do nothing."

"No tribunal can investigate crimes over the last 100 years," he said.

The tribunal's greatest challenge may be to apprehend suspects. A few are already in European and North American jails. But in Africa only Zambia has detained possible sus-

pects while other countries say they first want formal indictments.

The spotlight is focused most keenly on Zaire and Kenya whose leaders were both close to Mr. Habyarimana and who have excruciating relations with the new government in Kigali. Prominent Hutus reside in both countries.

Kenya's Daniel Arap Moi stunned the tribunal in early October when he declared it to be "haphazard" and said he would not cooperate. After a series of Kenyan clarifications, Mr. Goldstone was able to say that Mr. Moi's "misunderstandings and misperceptions" about the tribunal had been resolved.

But tribunal officials understand the danger that friendly governments will tip off suspects about to be indicted, allowing them to escape arrest. In public, at least, Mr. Goldstone doubts governments would flout the tribunal's arrest warrants and risk security

council sanctions.

"It is difficult to understand that any government would want to protect people who were charged by an international tribunal of the sorts of crimes we are talking about — genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes," he said.

Unlike the Nuremberg defendants and nearly 60,000 Hutus suspects crammed into Rwanda's jails, those convicted by the tribunal's two courts cannot be executed.

Life imprisonment is the maximum penalty, served in any prison around the world whose government volunteers and which meets "U.N. standards."

The wheels of the tribunal's justice have begun to turn, however slowly, and those who want to learn the truth about one of the century's greatest slaughters will need stamina.

The tribunal has leased its premises in Arusha for four years, with an option to extend.

Bosnia poised for 'war or peace'

(Continued from page 1)

concerns over the agreement have been aired by the Bosnian Serbs around Sarajevo and by Croats from the north of the country where territory will remain in Serb hands.

In recent weeks there have been noisy protests from Serbs living in certain areas around the Bosnian capital. Under the Dayton deal, these Serbs would have to return to the suburbs they control to government authority. Some Serbs have vowed to block the handover or leave if it goes ahead.

Mr. Holbrooke said he would raise the issue with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic with whom he met this weekend and who signed the Dayton accord on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs. He also added that the Bosnian government had "done more than has been reported in the media" to reassure the Bosnian Serbs who choose to stay in the areas to be returned.

"It's in the agreement,

People should live in their homes in peace. I stress once again, this country is not being divided it is being reunited," Mr. Holbrooke said.

Under the Dayton accord, Bosnia is to retain its sovereignty but consist of two equal political entities, a Bosnian Serb republic and a Muslim-Croat federation.

Clearing up a smaller procedural matter Mr. Holbrooke also said an "authoritative figure" from the Muslim-Croat federation would sign onto the Dayton accord. The federation's president, Kresimir Zubak, resigned earlier this month in protest at the agreement which leaves pre-war Croat areas in Serb hands.

In Budapest, the United States and European countries on Friday failed to settle transatlantic differences over a candidate to head a Bosnia mission and referred the decision to a conference in London.

The U.S. delegation lobbied hard at a two-day orga-

nisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting for career diplomat Robert Frick to head a civil task force which will try to organise elections, set up an arms control regime and monitor human rights in Bosnia.

French resistance and misgivings among other European countries that the United States would have a too dominant role in Bosnian peacekeeping prevented consensus being reached.

"France has plenty of highly qualified people to do the job," French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette said. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, although anxious not to get involved in the wrangling, backed the European position.

"We (Europeans) have a certain interest," Mr. Kinkel told reporters. "I understand the U.S. intentions to have the leading position."

In London, representatives of more than 50 nations and international groups met here Friday for the first full-scale

meeting on the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina since the Dayton accord last month.

"The task we have here today and tomorrow is to make sure the guns remain silent that the Dayton accords are put into effect, that war does not resume through any error or omission," said British Prime Minister John Major in opening the conference.

"We must begin the huge job of implementing and consolidating peace, and of rebuilding a country..."

The conference, chaired by British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, is dedicated to non-military aspects of stabilising embattled Bosnia-Herzegovina during its first post-war year.

Scheduled to run through Saturday evening, the conference was expected to study ways of rebuilding confidence among Bosnia's Croat Muslim and Serb communities as well as calming fears among Sarajevo's Serbs.

Japanese reactor

(Continued from page 12)

supply Monju with reprocessed plutonium and doubts about the system's commercial sense.

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Soviet dissidents issue warning

(Continued from page 12)

who, along with two colleagues, has been charged with rebellion against the government.

In their open letter, the Soviet dissidents, among them Ida Nudel and Yosef Mendeleveitch, referred to a new personality cult surrounding Mr. Rabin and an atmosphere of intolerance.

"If wearing a kippa (skullcap) or expressing a different opinion is going to be dangerous in Israel, why do the Jewish people need a state of their own?" the letter said.

Since Mr. Rabin's death, police have questioned more than a dozen right-wing protest leaders and rabbis about

their views and activities. Several members of anti-Arab groups had their movement restricted, and one was ordered held for three months in so-called administrative detention, without benefit of a trial.

Some government officials have said the crackdown went too far. The head of the police serious crimes unit told officers that not every person accused of having said something considered incitement needed to be investigated.

"Not everyone who tells a bad joke should be interrogated," said Legislator Dedi Zucker from the left-wing Meretz Party. "This is not healthy for a democracy."

13 killed in north Iraq blast

(Continued from page 12)

and stability in northern Iraq."

There was no claim of responsibility for the bombing.

"This cowardly act is the latest in a recent series of terrorist attacks in liberated northern Iraq, the INC statement said. "The atrocity follows the bombing of an INC facility on Oct. 31, killing 28, the blast at the Erbil home of an INC officer on Nov. 14, and the attempted bombing of an INC office in Sulaima-

niya on Dec. 5. The INC condemns all these criminal actions as examples of Saddam Hussein's blatant violation of international law and U.N. resolutions."

The INC offers its full cooperation to the U.N. and Kurdish authorities in Shakhawa to help in the investigations and to bring the killers to justice. The INC strongly urges the Security Council to take action to protect the Iraqi people, and those working to help the Iraqi people."

Egypt gets docile lawmakers

(Continued from page 1)

ities and follow up with the appropriate measures," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said in Washington on Thursday.

The U.S. made a similar call after the first round, but Mr. Mubarak denied on Thursday receiving any investigation request, adding Washington "does not intervene in Egypt's internal affairs."

Mr. Burns said the U.S. was reserving judgment on whether the vote was democratic until the government had carried out a probe and courts had ruled on the complaints.

But one Egyptian expert predicted it "could turn into a battle between the legislature and the judiciary."

"The government will fight it in the courts and it could take a long time," Mustapha Kamel Al Sayed, a political science professor at Cairo University, told AFP.

"If there is no solution (in the lower courts), then it will probably go to the constitutional court," which could order the parliament dissolved, Mr. Sayed said.

The court dissolved the 1987 parliament, ruling that the state system used to elect it was unconstitutional, and new elections were held in 1990.

Foreign investment in Israel jumps threefold to \$1.35b

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Foreign investment in Israel has skyrocketed over the last year, jumping threefold to \$1.35 billion, in another sign of growing confidence in the country's booming economy, the government announced Friday.

Foreign investment for the first 11 months of 1995 reached \$1.35 billion, compared to \$441 million during the same period in 1994, and \$304 million in 1993, the Central Bureau of Statistics said.

The finance ministry also announced that \$250 million in Israeli government bonds had been issued in the U.S. market for the first time without guarantees from the United States Treasury Department.

The bonds sold out immediately, and demand outstripped supply by three and a half times, the ministry said.

The United States had in the past guaranteed the bonds to assure investors uneasy about Israel's economy and security situation.

The Standards and Poor financial survey also bumped up its rating of Israel this week from B+ to A-.

The government, however, also said Friday that Israel's current account deficit, the gap between imports and exports, grew 6.4 per cent over the first three quarters of the year, compared to the same period in 1994.

Total exports of goods and services reached \$21 billion, an increase of \$3.4 billion over the same period last year. But it was offset by an even larger growth in imports, which swelled by \$3.8 billion to \$28.6 billion, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Israel's foreign debt reached \$18.5 billion, as of Sept. 30.

Much of the trade gap can be attributed to Israel's booming economy, which has registered an average of 5.5 per cent growth over the last five years and is expected to climb to seven per cent this year, rivaling Asia's economic tigers.

Yemen to lift subsidies on basic commodities over three years

DUBAI (R) — Yemen's finance minister has said his debt-ridden country was planning to lift subsidies on all basic commodities over the next three years under an economic reform programme.

Mohammad Ahmad Junaid told the London-based Saudi daily Asharq Al Ahsat that Sanaa, which began two-phase reforms in 1995, would not devalue its currency.

"This (lifting of subsidies) is a very sensitive issue because it affects low-income groups," he said. "Hence, we will cautiously deal with the matter until all subsidies on basic items are lifted gradually, and over three years."

Mr. Junaid gave no figure for the subsidies, but Deputy Premier Abdul Wahab Al Ansi told Reuters earlier this year they totalled \$400 million.

Sanaa in March raised the prices of petrol and basic services as part of efforts to reduce the chronic budget deficit and curb inflation.

The price rises sparked riots in the southern city of Aden.

Political sources in Sanaa said the government was expected to further raise prices of fuel, electricity and water and to retire some government employees at the beginning of next year.

Mr. Junaid said this year's reforms "achieved successful results."

The second-phase plan, to start in January, will focus on moves towards trade liberalisation, privatisation and operating a new free trade zone in the southern port of Aden.

Mr. Junaid said Yemen expected to reach a structural reform agreement with the World Bank in February "including basic components to achieve economic and financial stability."

Other targets include cutting the overall budget deficit in 1996 to six per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) from nine per cent in 1995, slashing inflation to 20 per cent from 40 per cent and raising economic growth to three per cent from one per cent, he added.

Belgian premier says mark domination would be price of EMU collapse

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Collapse of the single currency programme would open the way for domination by the mark, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene warned Friday.

Failure of efforts to launch a single European currency in 1999 would "kill the single market, result in domination by the mark and would engender frustration which could take Europe to the verge of disaster," he told the Le Soir newspaper.

"In my view we have to stand by the planned criteria and timetable because otherwise we face the unknown. I am increasingly convinced that Europe is at a crossroads and it is striking that few people are offering any alternative to Maastricht," he said.

He added: "If we do not succeed, and given growing pressure for enlargement of the European Union, we will see the creation of a vast free-trade area which would increase the temptation to use devaluation as an instrument of economic policy."

The wave of strikes in France was a passing problem, he said. France was committed to monetary union under the Maastricht treaty and had made clear that, with or without the single currency plan, it had to deal with certain problems such as the debt.

Any relaxation of efforts to strengthen public finances would not necessarily increase the number of jobs.

"We must tell people that even without monetary union we must reduce the debt and the interest charge ... otherwise our entire welfare system will be threatened," Mr. Dehaene said.

One of the grievances of strikers who have paralysed the French economy for two weeks is a plan to reform the heavily-indebted social security system. The French government faces major problems in reducing overall public deficits in time to qualify as a founder of a single currency on Jan. 1, 1999.

In Germany, opinion is turning increasingly hostile to the proposed surrender of the mark in favour of a single currency which, in the public mind, would be more inclined to erosion through inflation.

Japan business less glum but worries remain — survey

TOKYO (R) — Japan's executives are a bit less gloomy these days, but economists said improved corporate sentiment could prove fragile and is hardly enough to persuade the Bank of Japan to tighten its easy credit stance.

Key data in the Bank of Japan's quarterly "tankan" survey, released Friday, showed major firms were less pessimistic about the future at the time of the most recent survey in November than in August, when the previous survey was made.

The tankan is a closely watched clue to interest rate policy and general economic trends.

The tankan's key gauge of corporate sentiment, the manufacturers' diffusion index, rose to minus 14 in November from minus 18 in August, while that for non-manufacturers improved to minus 22 from minus 28.

The diffusion index compares companies expecting business to get better with those foreseeing a bleaker future.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast that the makers' diffusion index would improve to about minus 16 and that of non-manufacturers to about minus 25.

Among the other cheering data in the tankan was a forecast by manufacturers that their profits would rise 30 per cent in the current business year to next March. That compared with an August forecast of an 18.4 per cent increase.

Major firms also raised their predictions of capital investment in 1995/96 to a 3.8 per cent rise from the 3.0 per cent increase foreseen in the last survey. That would follow an 8.3 per cent drop in 1994/95.

Private economists and central bank officials cited the relative weakening of the yen as a key factor behind the improvement in business sentiment along with low interest rates and a rise in corporate profits due to restructuring efforts.

"The risks (of an economic downturn) are diminishing quite substantially," Kunihiko Takeshima, chief of the Bank of Japan's Research and Statistics Department, told reporters.

"Rather, we are now paying attention to how economic recovery will gain strength as time goes by," he said.

Mr. Takeshima warned, however, that Japan's recovery would likely lack strength for a while, and cited sluggish overseas economies as a troubling factor.

Private economists echoed the official caution.

"We are probably past the worst, but the speed at which things will get better will probably be rather slow," said Chris Calderwood, economist at Barclays De Zoete Wedd in Tokyo.

China urges strong start to 1996

BEIJING (AFP) — China stressed Friday the importance of good start for the national economy in 1996, as economists warned that crucial restructuring was needed to reduce inefficiency and waste.

A front-page editorial in the People's Daily said the focus for next year should be on the transition from a planned to a market economy, while intensifying operations to increase efficiency.

The editorial, entitled "Striving for a Good Start," emphasised the need for greater investment in agriculture, swifter state sector reform, strengthening anti-inflation measures and a greater opening to the outside world.

"If we do a good job in these four aspects next year, we can say that a good start has been achieved," it said.

The editorial followed the conclusion Thursday of a key conference on China's economic agenda for 1996, at which top government and party leaders pledged to combat inflation and other problems to ensure "sound" social development.

Referring to reforms of the agricultural and state sectors, President Jiang Zemin said the government "certainly must not underestimate the problems or take them lightly."

Meanwhile, a senior economist with the State Information Centre, Xu Hongyan, warned that the government targets laid out in the ninth five year plan, which begins in 1996, would require "a remarkable increase of the overall quality and efficiency of the national economy."

China had for too long maintained economic growth by resorting to increasing capital construction and financial input, which had caused low economic efficiency and a severe waste of resources, Mr. Xu was quoted as saying by the Xinhua news agency.

Around 60 per cent of China's economic growth relies on increases financial input, compared to an average 20 per cent in developed and newly-industrialised countries.

"China suffers from energy shortages on one hand, but wastes a lot of energy on the other, simply because of the extensive economic growth mode," Mr. Xu said.

French strikes grind into third week despite talks

PARIS (R) — Transport strikes crippling France dragged into a third week Friday and fresh violence flared despite impending talks between trade unions and the conservative government on disputed welfare and rail reforms.

For the 15th day, there were no trains and public transport was at standstill in Paris, Marseille and Bordeaux, forcing suburban commuters to slog through a total of 173 kilometres of traffic bottlenecks around the capital.

Striking firemen closed down one of Paris Orly airport's two runways, and a stoppage by air traffic controllers caused delays.

Violence erupted for a second day between striking miners and police in the northeastern town of Freyming-Merlebach.

The strikers armed with crowbars, metal bolts and rocks set fire to a mine company building, burned street barricades and fought running battles with 700 riot police and paramilitary gendarmes, who fired tear-gas and stun grenades.

Elsewhere, youths clashed with police on Thursday night in the western city of Nantes and the southern city of Montpellier.

The unions leading the strikes — the communist-led CGT and non-partisan Force Ouvriere — were to meet government-appointed mediator Jean Matteoli for first talks on the future of the indebted SNCF state railway.

Rail union leaders said they would tell Mr. Matteoli, president of the Consultative Economic and Social Council, the government must scrap both its railway and welfare plans and start afresh.

The unions also agreed to meet Labour Minister Jacques Barrot on Saturday for "detailed discussions" of the government plan to streamline the ailing social security system that funds health care, family allowance and pensions.

But with ministers refusing to talk of "negotiations," the unions urged their members to stay on strike and hold a new national action day with mass demonstrations next Tuesday.

Prime Minister Alain Juppe has refused to back down on his plans for tax hikes, health cost controls and later pensions for public employees to reform the debt-laden welfare state to prepare France for European monetary union.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY 9, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This morning today is good for beautifying your home, but in the evening doing something thoughtful for a fellow associate is wise.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) This day can be happy for you if you spend it with congenial friends and loved ones, but take time for some health treatments in the evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be more skillful at handling home affairs today and you get better results, then you can get out to the amusements you like.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is a good day for shopping and running errands, but pay attention to price, then this evening, spend time at home.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Clear up financial affairs in the morning today, and feel better about them. Get data for added business dealings in the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get rid of that bothersome situation in the morning, and you can delve into something practical and worthwhile in the evening.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be more objective and get rid of that secret worry early today. Do whatever will make outside relationships more ideal with the one you love.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you have had a disagreement with a friend today, try to resolve it during the day, so that tonight you can be with you mate.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You cannot understand how to take care of a worldly affair without assistance, so wait until it is clear to you. Pursue personal goals.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You find that a new idea can lead to obstacles so study it well first today, then get into public career activities you like.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be most careful in handling business affairs today, or you can have a loss. Make any corrections which are necessary.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Have long talks with a fellow associate and resolve some affair which is important to you both. Follow through with some plan of importance.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE Daily Crossword by Eugene Puffenberger

ACROSS

- Flower, for short
- FBI agent
- Aches' partner
- Sitarist Shankar
- Vowel sequence
- Unexpected defeat
- Alack's partner
- China front
- The last frontier
- Atlanta pros
- Concert halls
- Kinsman; abbr.
- Small boy
- Constituent of steel
- Landlord's sign
- Judge's seat
- Goddess; Lat.
- Houston pros
- Power agency
- Ivy League students
- Tenant's contract
- Acid used in beverages
- Pillaged
- Actress Lupino
- Provide a chair for
- Miami pros
- In a state of wonder
- Architect Saarinen
- English composer
- More modern
- "saw Elba"
- Vessel of 1492
- Painting style
- Forest animal
- Letter opener

DOWN

- Steffi of tennis
- Tra —
- Of grandparents
- Ascertain
- Dive
- Brainy bunch
- Verdi opera
- High time
- Narc target
- Dismay
- "I came, —, I conquered"
- Bottle or turtle follower
- Holy women; abbr.
- "Joy"
- Constellation
- Commerce
- Hebrew prophet
- Wedding place
- Great fear
- Odds' partners
- Succinct
- Abated
- Romantic isle
- Caravansary
- Greek epic
- Southpaw's feature
- Mrs. Gore
- Cling
- French painter
- Ranee's garment
- Mild oath
- Molding
- Grassy place
- Desideratum
- Parched
- Border lake
- "Karenina"
- Briny droplet

Thursday's puzzle solved

STAFF MCI SCUD
 LYDIA WEAR PONY
 APART AGRANT
 TERMINI INS SIR
 EAR AXING OER
 DIET OKA FATAL
 INTHEINCKOFTIME
 TURIN TON SUMO
 ANT BERTS MON
 NICKELODEON
 OTT RIA APOLLOS
 MAID STEN ROUGE
 ALOU LEGS TITLE
 DYNE ERG SNEER

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



UAE set to make record profits in '95

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks are performing better in 1995 due to a business upswing and their net profits are set to hit a record by the end of the year, bankers and economists have said.

Unaudited balance sheet circulated among banks showed most of them have exceeded the record earnings of 1994 by more than five per cent and they expect the profits during the whole year to be the highest ever.

"UAE banks' in general performed better this year due to an upturn in trade and construction activities," a bank manager told AFP.

Other factors are that the banks have consolidated their financial position in line with central bank instructions and have overcome the problem of bad debts which had adversely affected their performance in the past.

Central banks figures showed the Gulf country's 47 banks sharply boosted credits this year to face growing business, mostly in the commercial and construction sectors, the main beneficiaries of bank loans in the region.

Credits surged to around 71.7 billion dirhams (\$19.53 billion) by the end of June from 65.17 billion dirhams (\$17.75 billion) at the end of 1994. Bankers said there was an equivalent rise in the second half.

Several banks have boosted their capital to maintain their market share in credit activity after the central bank introduced curbs on

lending to prevent a repetition of the UAE's worst banking crisis in mid 1980s.

The crisis was caused by a rush in providing loans, leading to an accumulation of bad and doubtful debts and forcing several banks to merge to avoid collapse. Other banks had to set aside large portions of their annual net profits to build loan loss provisions.

"You can say the bad debt problem has become a matter of the past. This is helping banks to make higher profits," said Zaki Kaswani of Al Sharhan Company, an economy, real-estate and stockbrokerage institution.

Apart from this factor, UAE banks have largely expanded their operations in providing personal loans while the four Sharjah banks which had financial problems have recovered. According to my information, most banks in the UAE will make higher earnings in 1995 over the record profits of last year," he added.

Share prices at AFM recover

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Shares prices recovered by more than two per cent in the Jordanian stock market this week as investors sought solace in companies tipped to post good annual performance figures, brokers said Friday.

The recovery, though short of optimistic expectations, comes after a continued decline for four weeks resulting from a strong crunch on liquidity as funds were channelled to primary issues and real estate transactions as well as to high-yield short-term government bonds, the brokers said.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said volume for the week ending was 2.8 million dinars, half the previous week's 5.5 million dinars.

The week saw 1.7 million shares changing hands under 2,600 contracts, with daily average trading registered at 600,000 dinars, compared with the previous week 1.1 million dinars, the report said.

The official AFM index based on 60 major companies

closed at 152 points, 3.3 points, or 2.2 per cent, up from the week's opening of 148.7 points.

Separate sectoral indices showed that commercial banks gained 3.8 per cent, insurance firms 1.1 per cent and services companies 0.1 per cent while industrials dipped by 0.3 per cent.

Industrials accounted for the highest volume in sectoral trading on a turnover of 1.37 million dinars or 48.3 per cent of the weekly volume, followed by commercial banks with 1.03 million dinars, the services sector with 430,000 dinars and insurance stocks with 8,000 dinars.

Stocks of 88 companies were traded the week. When business closed for the week, 41 companies had gained, 33 had dipped and 14 remained unchanged.

AFM dealers, who cannot be identified under standing market guidelines said, the recovery in the market was the result of expectations that many companies were expected to announce better than expected performance during 1995.

"The actual rise in prices should have been much higher at this time of the year," said a broker. "But the shortage of funds in the market depressed enthusiasm."

Funds from the market were channelled to high-interest short-term certificates of deposit offered by the Central Bank of Jordan and to real estate dealings as well as to meet shareholder's obligations to meet subscription calls for paid-up capital instalments by companies, the broker said.

"Furthermore, dozens of companies are also being set up, and thus a part of the funds also went to the primary market" for the new issues, said the broker.

"The market performed badly in the last two months of the year, but a recovery could be expected early in the new year," added the broker.

However, other market observers said the market needed an urgent inflow of fresh capital, part of which could come in the form of foreign investments. But that is possible only with the enactment of new regulations, which are in the works, that would lift some of the restrictions on foreign dealers entering the market.

Business Daily Beat

Batayneh expects JIC to earn JD 15 million in investment returns

THE JORDAN Investment Corporation (JIC) is likely to make a JD 15 million profit this year from its investment in more than 600 public and private shareholding companies, JIC Director-General Mohammad Batayneh has said. The profit will be JD 1 million more than the figure of 1994. Mr. Batayneh described 1996 as the beginning of the process to activate real investments in Jordan as well as the starting point to real involvement in the projects outlined at the Amman economic summit.

JIC, which is the legal successor of the Pension Fund, is considered the investment arm of the government, following an investment policy drawn according to directives from the board of directors. The corporation is governed by a special law that specifies its functions and obligations mainly in looking for investment opportunities and promoting feasible projects in cooperation with the public and private sectors either in conducting studies or in the establishment process. The JIC operates on commercial basis, as it aims at generating profit from setting up projects and industries, and its assets at present are the contributions from the pension fund and the participation of the government in public shareholding companies and new companies set up by the corporation.

Mr. Batayneh said JIC had participated with the private sector in conducting feasibility studies for conveyor belt projects, a grain mill in Aqaba, steel sheets scheme and other industries in cooperation with the armed forces. He added that the studies have confirmed the economic feasibility of the projects which, in the next stage, will be set up with the participation of the private sector. The JIC chief said many industrial companies were established in 1995, among which a JD 60 million holding company with the participation of the potash and the phosphate companies and the private sector, to extract minerals from the Dead Sea. Another project set up this year was a JD 4.8 million metal casting company.

Mr. Batayneh announced the establishment of a company, with the private sector, for hotel management as the international Melia company will be managing three hotels in Amman and Aqaba. JIC also transformed the Veterinary Vaccination Centre into a JD 1.5 million public shareholding company with a 70 per cent equity from the private sector. In addition, JIC established a tomato paste factory in Mafrq at a cost of JD 6 million and a project for freezing and canning vegetables and fruit at an investment cost of JD 3.5 million, with an 80 per cent equity coming from the private sector.

The JIC chief regarded tourism as the most important sector attracting foreign investment and, as such, he said the corporation was ready to discuss offers to buy any of its stakes in tourism facilities. The JIC offered its equity in the Marriott Hotel for sale but did not receive any offer until now. In addition to investments, the corporation plays an important role in remedying the problems of troubled companies.

JIC's portfolio of investments in 60 public and private shareholding companies amounts to more than JD 170 million (Al Dustour).

Exports rise by 24 per cent

STUDIES PREPARED by the Amman Chamber of Industry show that exports during the first nine months of this year increased by about 24 per cent over the same period of 1994 having reached a total of JD 710 million compared to JD 560 million. The amount accounts for 90 per cent of total 1994 exports. Imports rose slightly by JD 167 million during the period covered reaching a total of JD 1,893 million, 39 per cent of which was met by exports. The studies point out that the increase in imports was covered nearly four times by the rise in exports (Al Ra'i).

Financial Markets

in cooperation with
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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Nov 9/12/95	Tokyo Close Nov 7/12/95
Sterling Pound	1.5420	1.5422**
Deutsche Mark	1.4465	1.4455
Swiss Franc	1.1710	1.1678**
French Franc	4.9800	4.9781**
Japanese Yen	101.00	101.46
European Currency Unit	1.2758	1.2776**

(N/A For STG)
European Opening in 200 a.m. GMT

Inter-currency Interest Rates

Date: 7/12/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.68	5.56	5.37	5.25
Sterling Pound	8.62	6.44	6.30	6.25
Deutsche Mark	5.43	3.75	3.62	3.56
Swiss Franc	2.23	2.00	1.87	1.81
French Franc	5.81	5.61	5.62	5.62
Japanese Yen	0.22	0.25	0.30	0.31
European Currency Unit	5.43	5.41	5.25	5.12

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1 S.D. (US\$1,000,000 or equivalent).

Precious Metals

Date: 7/12/1995

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	388.75	7.70	Silver	5.27	0.100

21 karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 7/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0909	1.0964
Deutsche Mark	0.4899	0.4923
Swiss Franc	0.6055	0.6065
French Franc	0.1422	0.1429
Japanese Yen	0.6969	0.7004
Dutch Guilder	0.4373	0.4395
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0444	0.0446
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

Other Currencies

Date: 7/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.6050	1.3780
Lebanese Lira	0.044200	0.044600
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8330	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma	0.2606	0.3000
Cypriot Pound	1.5000	1.5500

Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3690/00	Canadian dollar	1.4469/79
	1.6202/12	Deutschemarks	1.1714/24
	29.74/78	Dutch guilders	4.9827/77
	1591.8/3.3	Swiss francs	101.33/43
	6.6550/50	Belgian francs	5.5928/28
	6.3500/50	French francs	1.4153/55
	5.5928/28	Italian lire	0.7399/04
	1.4153/55	Japanese yen	7.7333/45
	0.7399/04	Swedish crowns	
	7.7333/45	Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	
		Singapore dollars	
		Australian dollars	
		Hong Kong dollars	
One sterling	\$1.5302/12		
Gold (ounce)	\$389.30/389.60		

Pakistan stock market capitalisation suffers massive loss

KARACHI (AFP) — Pakistan's main stock exchange has lost almost a quarter of its market capitalisation this year, triggering widespread concern over the adverse impact on the country's economy.

The total market capitalisation has slumped during the period to 308 billion rupees (\$8.8 billion) from 400 billion rupees (\$11.4 billion) 11 months ago, officials at Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE) said.

The KSE 100 shares index hit a record low of 1,322 points last week after sliding since March 1994 when it peaked at 2,661.

The last nine weeks have been particularly damaging, as the index lost about 100 points.

KSE President Siraj Qasim told AFP the main reasons behind the fall included the deteriorating law-and-order situation, a liquidity strain on the bourse and severely dampened interest by local and foreign investors.

More than 1,700 people have been killed in Karachi, the nation's commercial capital, this year.

Analysts also cited, as a

reason for the index's fall, the recent seven per cent devaluation of the rupee against the dollar as well as a now-settled row with Emirates Bank over payment of excise duty.

Amid the market slump, rumours spread that the government was dangerously short of funds and that foreign exchange reserves had dropped to the point that private foreign-currency accounts may be frozen.

However, emphatic denials by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the central State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) have helped dispel apprehensions about the economy.

"The government has no plan to impose foreign-exchange control, freeze foreign-exchange accounts or use safety deposits. These are all baseless rumours," Ms. Bhutto said.

The prime minister has called the presidents of the KSE and two other stock exchanges in Lahore and Islamabad to a meeting in the capital Sunday to consider ways of pulling the market out of the crisis.

Market analysts expect the KSE will urge the government to shore up the market with injection of funds by its investment institutions.

Sources at KSE said another factor was that foreign investors were generally pulling out from faltering emerging markets. "It is only natural that foreigners now like to invest near home," said Yasin Lakhani, a former KSE president.

Many believe that the violence in Karachi has shaken investor confidence.

"No doubt the Karachi bourse is attractive but being an investor I cannot take risks and will rather wait until the situation improves," said a foreign investor.

The government has sworn that the economy is stable and that there is no cause for alarm over foreign-exchange reserves which contain \$1.2 billion. In addition, the government said, the International Monetary Fund agreed last month to a \$600 million standby credit.

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No live doves for Atlanta ceremonies

N. Korea, Afghanistan set to miss centennial games

KARUIZAWA, Japan (AP) — The doves of peace have been grounded.

For the first time at a summer Olympics since 1920, the opening ceremonies at next year's centennial games in Atlanta will not feature the traditional release of live doves.

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games announced that, in the interest of the birds' welfare, the ceremonies will include only a "symbolic and theatrical" release of doves.

ACOG has been under pressure from animal rights groups not to use live doves in order to prevent a repeat of what happened at the 1988 Seoul Olympics — when flocks of doves went up in flames as the cauldron was lit.

ACOG president Billy Payne informed the International Olympic Committee executive board that doves will be safe when Atlanta stages its opening ceremony on the evening of July 19.

"Because it will be total nighttime, we elected not to put at risk any of these animals," Payne said. "We also thought the best way to do it was a little bit more theatrically and a little bit more symbolically."

Payne gave no details of how the ceremonial release will be carried out but said no one will miss it.

The traditional of releasing live doves as a symbol of peace started at the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp. The release has been part of the ceremonies at every games since then, except at the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer when dove-shaped balloons were used because of the bitter cold.

The International Olympic Committee supported ACOG's decision, noting that the Olympic charter requires only a symbolic release

of doves at the opening ceremonies.

The dove decision was announced as Atlanta officials briefed the IOC on the final plans for the three-hour opening ceremony.

Payne maintained ACOG's tight lid of secrecy on the details of the ceremonies, reiterating only that they will celebrate three main themes: youth, the American south and the centennial of the modern Olympics.

IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch said he was impressed with the plans.

"We think this opening ceremony will be first class," he said. "We know very well that the United States are the masters in this type of spectacle, not only for spectators but for billions watching on TV, it will be historical ceremonies."

The Atlanta presentation followed Salt Lake City's first report to the IOC since being awarded the 2002 Winter Games last June.

Salt Lake officials had been bidding for the Games for nearly 30 years before finally succeeding on their fifth attempt.

"I still can't believe we're here as an organizing committee rather than a bid committee," panel Chairman Frank Jochik said. "Whenever we have a little time, I want to go out and lobby someone. But that is not longer appropriate to do."

IOC says four-year bans too harsh: The International Swimming Federation went too far by adopting four-year suspensions for first-time steroid offenders, top IOC officials said Tuesday.

At a special congress in Rio de Janeiro last week, FINA doubled its penalty for swimmers testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs.

The move, which followed a series of doping scandals

involving Chinese swimmers, conflicts with international Olympic committee guidelines calling for two-year suspensions.

"We want penalties to be severe but not so severe that an athlete cannot come back," senior IOC executive board member Dick Pound said. "It seems four years runs that risk."

FINA is the second major international federation to ignore the IOC guidelines. In August, the International Amateur Athletic Federation, world track's governing body, rejected proposals to adopt a two-year suspension and upheld its four-year rule.

Record entries for Atlanta: A record 195 countries have accepted invitations to compete at next summer's Atlanta Olympics, with only North Korea and Afghanistan failing to reply.

Atlanta has surpassed the previous high of 169 entries set at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

The invitations were sent to 197 national Olympic committees July 19, a year before the start of the Games. The deadline for replies was Nov. 15.

IOC director general Francois Carrard said there was no answer from either North Korea or Afghanistan. He said the Koreans' silence was in line with the communist country's isolationist policies, while "communications problems" might explain why there was no word from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan did not take part in the 1992 Games because of the country's civil war and remains torn by internal strife.

North Korea did send a team to Barcelona after boycotting the 1988 Games in Seoul and the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. North Korea previously competed in 1980

at Moscow and 1976 at Montreal.

Dick Pound, an IOC executive board member, said the North Koreans' absence was not surprising.

"Their non-participation would be consistent with their virtual total isolation," he said. "It's less a boycott than an application of an internal policy. They haven't participated in any sports competition in the last year or so."

Seating is disbelieving for Atlanta Games: When it comes to ticket requests to the 1996 Olympics, complaints have come as fast as orders.

Only about 249,000 of the 337,000 Americans who sent mail orders for Olympics seats will actually receive tickets through the organizers' lottery system. Most will receive only half of what they sought.

Between 37,000 and 88,000 people who entered the computerized lottery failed to receive tickets for such popular events



Tennis star Monica Seles is lifted up by basketball star Shaquille O'Neal after a press conference at the All-Star Cafe in New York December 6. Seles will join O'Neal.

Andre Agassi, Wayne Gretzky, Ken Griffey Jr. and Joe Montana as partners in the restaurant (Reuters photo)

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

44K 10765 04 0443 407
East opens the bidding with one heart. What do you bid now?

A - This is going to be a guessing game. Either side could have slam; neither might be able to make game. Under these circumstances, you might as well make the opponents guess first. Jump to four spades.

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

40 0742 04K 6765 44K4

The bidding has proceeded: WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH 10 041 20 2

What do you bid now?
A - No diamond bid is going to come close to doing your hand justice. The way to show your strength is start with a cue-bid of three hearts, then bid diamonds as cheaply as possible when the bidding next gets round to you.

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

4KJ10882 04082 44K5

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST 1A 20 Pass Pass

What do you bid now?

A - You have a very powerful hand that is suitable for play in any one of three suits. For that reason, no spade bid describes the hand adequately. The correct action is to double. Since partner has not yet bid, that is for takeout.

Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

48 096 0454 4KQJ10854

The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1A Pass 2A Pass

What do you bid now?
A - We know that three clubs suggests a rather weaker hand, but what would you like to do? Your hand is not nearly good enough to force to game; besides, a jump to four clubs might take you beyond your only makeable game, three no trump. Bid three clubs.

Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

44K 103 0KJ72 04Q3 4KQ

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with three clubs. What action do you take?

A - We hope you didn't even consider three no trump with only one stopper in the enemy suit, and 22 points in high cards! Make a take-out double, in the hope that partner can bid a major. Your real problem could come on the next round.

Q. 6 - North-South vulnerable, as South you hold:

478 04K 10762 045 4KJ4

The bidding has proceeded: WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH 50 Pass Pass

What action do you take?

A - We have harped on the fact that, if you pass with this type of hand, you are going to be a stolid blind. Bid five hearts. When this hand was played in the 1980 Vanderbilt Teams, South elected to pass and North held 4K 4 QJ 9 8 5 4 3 09 44 10 8 3. As the cards lay, six hearts depended on no more than guessing the location of the queen of clubs — not too difficult on this auction.



Qweider Establishment Introduces new perfume from Fragonard

General Manager of Qweider Trading Establishment Ali Qweider Thursday held a press conference at the Jordan Inter-Continental hotel, during which he introduced the new perfume Le Soleil for Women from the well-known French perfume house, Fragonard, which was established in the 16th century. Mr Qweider said the new flower perfume is light and fresh, noting that it derives its inspiration from the sun, whose light, and heat inject life in every thing around it. He added that the new perfume combines the smells of jasmine, orange flower, memosa, rose, white and purple tulip, in addition to other flower scents. "It is for the woman who likes glittering light, and shining look and smiles," he said.

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 - CAR IS AN ASSET

APPLY IN PERSON WITH CV AND PICTURE

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ANNOUNCEMENT

THE CENTRAL BANK OF JORDAN
The Central Bank of Jordan announces that, in conformity with the law of the Central Bank and the bylaw of the issuance of Jordanian Currency No. (11) year 1995, a modified third issue JD 20 banknote will be put in circulation as from Saturday 9/12/1995.

The specifications of the new note are completely the same as the note currently in circulation, except for the following modifications:-

- * The phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in Arabic has been added to the front of the note.
- * The phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in English has been added to the back.

* The dates (both the Hejira and Gregorian) in Arabic has been placed to the right of the dates in English on the back of the note.

The modified note will circulate alongside the existing note and both shall remain in circulation as legal tender.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144
PHILADELPHIA

Kevin Costner
in
WATERWORLD
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45

CINEMA TEL: 699238
PLAZA

Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi
and Mahmoud Hamideh
in
A Woman Who shook the Throne of Egypt
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420
CONCORD

Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi
and Mahmoud Hamideh...in
A Woman Who shook the Throne of Egypt
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Sylvester Stallone...in
ASSASSINS
Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15

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"Sumaa"
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Hi Citizen
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Written & directed by
Mohammad Shawaqfeh

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
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in view of the travel of the actors abroad the theatre is closed until further notice

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Former Olympians honoured

NEW YORK (R) — Former Olympians Dick Button, Tenley Albright, Bill Cleary, Jim Craig, Dorothy Hamill and Diann Roffe-Steinrotter were named Thursday among the top 100 Olympic champions in history. Other former Olympic champions, chosen by the USOC and the U.S. Olympic Alumni Association, were Andrea Mead Lawrence, Phil Mahre, Malvin Whitfield, Glen Davis, Dan Gable, Lones Wigger, Sheila Young Ochowicz, Carol Heiss Jenkins, Dick Fosbury, J. Michael Plumb, Charles Moore, Jack McCartan and Kristi Yamaguchi. So far 60 former Olympians have been chosen for the 100 best list, and the rest will be named in the run-up to the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

NBA referees sign 5-year pact

NEW YORK (R) — The National Basketball Association and the National Basketball Referees Association signed a five-year labour agreement on Thursday, ending the more than two-month lockout of referees, the NBA said. The referees will begin a five-day training camp Thursday night in New Jersey and will return to officiating on December 12, the NBA said in a news release. The NBA said referees' salaries will rise by 60 per cent over the term of the contract. According to a league spokesman earlier this week, the referees would get an 18.7 per cent salary increase in the first year.

Yankees get Martinez deal

NEW YORK (R) — The New York Yankees have obtained slugging first baseman Tino Martinez from the Seattle Mariners in a five-player deal. The Yankees received Martinez, relief pitcher Jeff Nelson and minor league pitcher Jim Mecir from the Mariners and sent third baseman Russ Davis and pitcher Sterling Hitchcock to Seattle. New York Newsday newspaper reported on Thursday. Martinez agreed to a five-year, \$20 million contract with the Yankees, Newsday reported. Martinez, who turned 28 on Thursday, hit .293 with 31 homers and 111 RBI, all career highs.

Bears' running back breaks leg

CHICAGO (AP) — Robert Green, the Chicago Bears' second-leading rusher, broke his left leg during the 27-7 loss to the Detroit Lions and will be out for the rest of the National Football League season. Bears spokesman Bryan Harlan said Green broke his fibula, the outer and smaller of two bones of the leg, while covering the kickoff right after scoring Chicago's only touchdown on an 11-yard run in the third quarter Monday night. Green has been used as a third-down back in place of starter Rashaan Salaam but has outplayed the rookie in recent games. He gained a team-leading 63 yards on eight carries against Detroit, while Salaam has 3 yards on seven carries. Green had gained 570 yards on 107 carries.

UEFA Cup draw announced

GENEVA (AP) — UEFA Cup, Quarterfinal round, First leg - March 5, Second leg - March 19. FC Barcelona (Spain) vs. PSV Eindhoven (Netherlands), Slavia Prague (Czech Republic) vs. AS Roma (Italy), AC Milan (Italy) vs. Girondins Bordeaux (France), Bayern Munich (Germany) vs. Nottingham Forest (England), Cupwinners Cup, Quarterfinal Round, First leg - March 7, Second leg - March 21. Dynamo Moscow (Russia) vs. Rapid Vienna (Austria), Parma AC (Italy) vs. Paris-SG (France), Deportivo (Spain) vs. Real Zaragoza (Spain), Borussia Moenchengladbach (Germany) vs. Feyenoord Rotterdam (Netherlands).

Newcastle meet Chelsea today

LONDON (R) — English League leaders Newcastle return to London for the second time in six days when they play Chelsea on Saturday looking to complete the double over Glenn Hoddle's sides.

Uncharacteristic lapses from the Newcastle defence last Sunday allowed Wimbledon to come back twice to force a 3-3 draw with Kevin Keegan's men who are five points clear of Manchester United at the top of the table.

Newcastle, who have not lost for 15 matches, beat Chelsea 2-0 in September and will be determined to pick up three more points against the mid-table Londoners who held Manchester United to a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford last week.

United, who have drawn their last two games 1-1 against both Nottingham Forest and Chelsea, could be without six first-team regulars for the visit of Sheffield Wednesday.

Full-back Denis Irwin has been called into the Ireland squad for next Wednesday's European Championship decider against Netherlands, joining the injured or suspended.

Goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, Roy Keane, Nicky Butt, Gary Pallister and Ryan Giggs all missed the Chelsea game and Giggs is the only one with a chance of returning this weekend.

If Newcastle or Manchester United slip up, third-placed Arsenal, five points behind United, could close the gap by winning at Southampton.

Southampton have won only once in their last five games and striker Gordon Watson and midfielders Neil Maddison and Neil Heaney are all in contention for a return to the side as the Saints seek to avenge their 4-2 loss at Highbury in September.

Tottenham could leapfrog into third place if they rediscover the art of scoring and beat manager Gerry Francis's former club Queen's Park Rangers at home.

Robinson leads Spurs past Hawks

ATLANTA (R) — David Robinson scored 31 points and added 17 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs won their fourth straight game with a 104-102 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Thursday. Sean Elliott added 21 points and Avery Johnson had 20.

"We had them down seven, then nine. They came back," Spurs coach Bob Hill said. "We didn't play great, but we won."

In Milwaukee, Vin Baker scored 13 of his career-high 32 points in the first quarter as the Milwaukee Bucks raced to a 11-point lead on the way to a 112-103 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Glenn Robinson scored 23 points and Benoit Benjamin added 19 for Milwaukee. Loy Vaught had 19 points and 10 rebounds for his fifth straight double-double and Keith Tower added 19 points for Los Angeles, which lost its sixth straight following a 7-5 start.

In Portland, Rod Strickland scored 10 of his 18 points in a third-quarter run and Clifford Robinson had 24 as the Portland Trail Blazers rallied for a 96-88 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

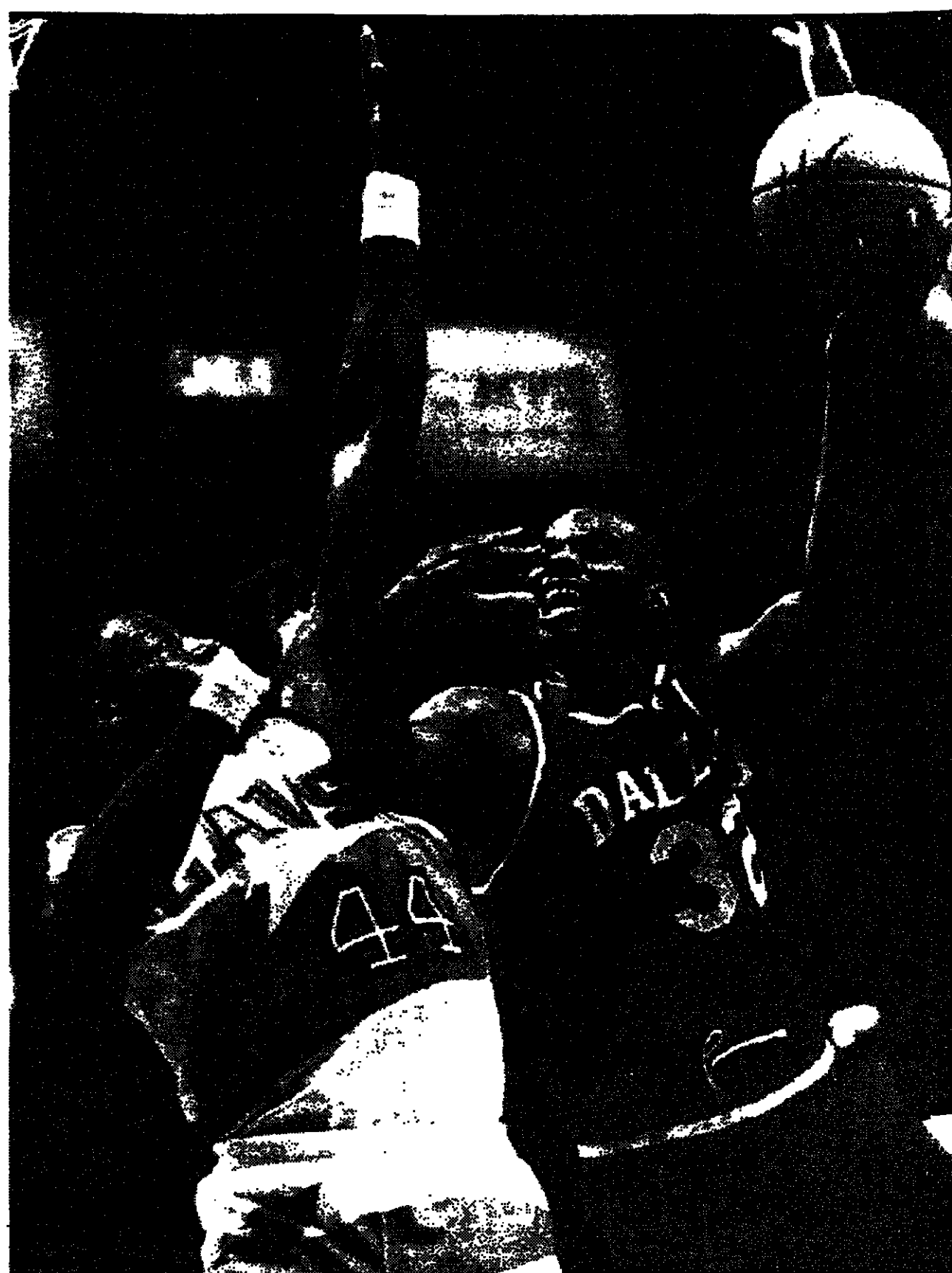
Aaron McKie scored 18 points, rookie Arryas Sabonis added 17 and Gary Trent had 15 and 11 rebounds for Portland (9-8).

At Utah, Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf scored an NBA season-high 51 points and Dale Ellis added 20 points as the Denver Nuggets posted their third straight win, 124-119, over the Utah Jazz.

Abdul-Rauf connected on 9-of-14 attempts from three-point range and recorded the first 50-point game in the league since Glen Rice scored 56 points for the Miami Heat last April.

Abdul-Rauf connected on all five of his three-point attempts in the first quarter as Denver held a 34-29 lead.

Karl Malone had 26 points, 22 rebounds and six assists to lead the Jazz. In Vancouver, Joe Dumars



Jamal Mashburn (right) of the Dallas Mavericks goes up for a shot guarded by Michael Cage of the Cleveland Cavaliers during fourth quarter action at the Gund Arena. Mashburn

scored 28 points in a losing effort as the Cavs won in overtime, 108-107 (Reuters photo)

scored eight points in a fourth-quarter run as the Detroit Pistons knocked off the

Vancouver Grizzlies, '93-'94, sending Vancouver to its 17th straight defeat.

The win spoiled a career-high 31-point performance by Vancouver's Greg Anthony.

Vancouver has tied Miami for the sixth-longest losing streak in league history.

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Courts move in where voters left off in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian politicians face months of legal wrangling after the rough-and-ready parliamentary elections in decades gave the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) a 94 per cent majority in the new parliament.

Scattered rioting broke out in parts of the Cairo area and the Nile Delta on Thursday evening when supporters of the losing candidates heard the final results announced by Interior Minister Hassan Al-Alfi.

In Abu Kibir in Sharkia province, rioters attacked the telephone exchange and banks and set fire to railway carriages, the government newspaper Al-Gumhouria said on Friday.

In Saff on the east bank of the Nile south of the capital, demonstrators started fires and closed the road to Cairo. Police dispersed them, it added.

But there were no immediate reports of unrest outside mosques after Friday prayers, a traditional occasion for political protests, especially by the Islamist movement.

Losing candidates have alleged massive irregularities by the NDP and voting in both the first round of election on Nov. 29 and in the second round this Wednesday.

The government says abuses did take place but the elections overall reflected the will of the people.

Administrative courts took complaints from more than 100 constituencies earlier this week and referred them to a higher court, which in turn passed them to a group known as the Commissioners of the Council of State.

The commissioners will meet on Saturday to decide the next step in what could be a very lengthy process.

But the government and the opposition parties have already offered different interpretations of the law.

The opposition says the

Interior Ministry should organise fresh elections in disputed constituencies, or at least refrain from announcing the winners.

But government spokesman Nabil Osman said on Friday that his understanding was that a parliamentary committee would have the last word on all electoral disputes.

Meanwhile candidates declared to have won would be able to take their seats and enjoy parliamentary immunity, he said.

"Only parliament can take a decision... after the last elections (in 1990) parliament rejected 99 per cent of the complaints for lack of evidence," he told Reuters.

Mr. Osman said the NDP would have liked the opposition parties to have more than the 13 seats they won.

"But it was up to the electorate to decide," he added.

The opposition, in testimony corroborated by independent witnesses and monitoring groups, says police acted on behalf of the NDP in hundreds of cases, arresting opposition election agents and closing polling stations down for long periods without explanation.

Opposition newspapers on Friday resumed their attacks on the elections. "Anger is sweeping the Egyptian masses across the country in protest at the distortion of their will and the rigging of the elections," said the Wafd Party newspaper.

The liberal Wafd, the country's oldest political party, has six seats in the new parliament and is expected to lead the tiny opposition groups.

The NDP won 317 seats but the government newspaper Al-Ahram said 99 of the 114 independents had already cast in their lot with the winners, giving the ruling party 416 out of 444 seats.

The leftist Tagammu Party has five seats, the Islamist Ahrar one seat and the Nasserites one.

PNA police question human rights activist

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — A leading human rights activist said Friday he was detained by Palestinian police after he complained publicly that Yasser Arafat's government has ignored queries about abuses against prisoners.

Psychiatrist Iyad Sarraj said he was questioned by Palestinian National Authority (PNA) police for nine hours Thursday and that interrogators demanded he sign a pledge to stop criticising Arafat's rule.

Dr. Sarraj said he refused and was released without signing the document. Dr. Sarraj runs a Gaza City mental health clinic and heads a human rights group, the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens Rights.

Mr. Arafat said Friday that Dr. Sarraj was detained "because he gave false information, completely against what is going on in the Palestinian authority."

Dr. Sarraj told a seminar earlier this week that he has sent more than 400 messages, both in writing and orally, to Palestinian officials, demanding information about cases

of suspected human rights abuses by security officials.

Dr. Sarraj said he was particularly concerned about the deaths in detention of six Palestinians over the past 18 months.

The Palestinian attorney general, Khaled Kidra, has said all six cases were being investigated and the guilty would be punished.

Dr. Sarraj said he never received an answer to his questions about details of the cases.

Dr. Kidra and Palestinian police commanders were not immediately available for comment Friday.

Mr. Arafat has been widely criticised in the past for his handling of dissent. He has temporarily shut down Palestinian newspapers that published critical articles, and intelligence officers have summoned journalists for questioning over stories they wrote.

Earlier this year, another leading human rights activist, Raji Sourani, was held for two days after he protested against the establishment of secret military tribunals.



Bosnian Serbs set up a placard reading "Was the Dayton map made by a man?" in Grahovica, one of the Serb-dominated areas of Sarajevo as they prepare for a demonstration against the Bosnian peace accord brokered by the U.S. in Dayton, Ohio (AFP photo)

France toughens demand for release of pilots from Bosnian Serb custody

BUDAPEST (Agencies) — French Foreign Minister

Hervé de Charette on Friday stepped up warnings of retaliation if two French pilots captured by Bosnian Serbs were not handed over, as agreed with French President Jacques Chirac.

Mr. De Charette threatened "appropriate consequences" if the pilots were not handed over "within the time limits and conditions" set by Mr. Chirac.

He was speaking on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the pan-European security body, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

On Wednesday, Mr. Chirac issued an ultimatum to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic that the two pilots should be returned to France before the Paris conference on Bosnia, set down for Dec. 14.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, representing his country at the Budapest meeting, told reporters Friday: "The United States always supports

the demands of the French government."

"The U.S. government is doing all it can to resolve this troublesome and vexing issue," he added.

On Thursday, Yugoslav authorities said France's warning of "widespread repercussions" unless the two French pilots were immediately released was "unacceptable."

The men were captured when their Mirage 2000 was shot down three months ago during a NATO bombing mission.

They are believed held by the Bosnian Serb army.

Mr. Talbott hinted that U.S. military intelligence and diplomats had been directed towards the problem of the pilots.

"We have been working in every way that we can, every level publicly and in not so public ways to bring about their release," Mr. Talbott said. "We entirely understand the depth of feeling on the part of our French friends and colleagues."

The dilemma of the fate of the pilots has hung over

the peace talks in Dayton and now the arrangements to implement the military and civilian arms of the peace process.

The pilots were captured near the Bosnian Serb "capital" of Pale.

Ever since, their whereabouts has been unclear. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has said the two men were taken from a hospital by unknown kidnappers.

France insists that Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic put pressure on the Bosnian Serbs to come up with the pilots whom Paris seems certain are still alive.

President Chirac told President Milosevic on Wednesday that France would take unspecified action if the pilots were not freed quickly.

In a follow up on Thursday, France warned that "the consequences... will strike those who are responsible for their detention and those who have not respected their commitments."

5 children among at least 13 killed in north Iraq blast

SHAQLAWA, Iraq (Agencies) — Five children were among at least 13 people killed in a bomb attack at a petrol station in Kurdish-held northern Iraq on Thursday, hospital officials said here Friday.

The Iraqi National Congress (INC), a coalition of opposition groups, said as many as 20 people were killed and pointed a finger of blame at Baghdad.

Marwan Mohammad of Shaqlawa hospital said three women, five children and five men died in Thursday's blast, including two U.N. guards. Twelve people were still being treated in the hospital of the mountain town.

Four of the children killed were riding home in their parents' car from a wedding when the bomb exploded as two U.N. vehicles were driving past the petrol station operated by the British charity Save the Children.

"I heard a blast, saw smoke and then fainted," said their mother Bahiya Aziz, who also had her husband and their two other children in the car. They were slightly injured.

The bomb was believed to be a remote-controlled de-

vice and deliberately targeted against the United Nations, a U.N. commander for the main Kurdish town of Erbil said.

"The blast was so powerful that it lifted one of the U.N. vehicles completely off the ground and totally destroyed both of them," said the U.N. sector commander, who asked not to be named.

U.N. guards have been posted in northern Iraq since Kurds took over the region in defiance of Baghdad in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war.

The INC, in a statement faxed to media organisations, said the bomb killed 20 people and that it was placed on a tanker which transported fuel from Baghdad to northern Iraq for U.N. vehicles.

It urged the United Nations "to take action to protect the Iraqi people and those helping them from (President) Saddam Hussein's deadly attacks."

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), meanwhile, said the bomb was placed by "terrorists" near a stationary fuel tank. The attack was an attempt "to undermine peace

(Continued on page 7)

Soviet dissidents caution against Israeli crackdown

TEL AVIV (AP) — Former Soviet dissidents warned Friday that the government has gone too far in its campaign against Jewish militants and that Israeli democracy was in danger.

The dissidents, among them several who were jailed for their beliefs in the Soviet Union, urged in an open letter to "stop the witch hunt and the spread of hatred in our country."

The publication of letter in the Jerusalem Post daily was the latest sign of an escalating debate in Israel over where freedom of speech ends and incitement to violence starts.

Critics have complained that the government is using its crackdown on Jewish militants to stifle legitimate opposition to the government's peace policies.

Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated Nov. 4 by a deeply observant Jew who felt the prime minister betrayed Israelis by handing the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Rabin's widow, Leah, and other Israeli leaders have said that right-wing opposition leaders set the stage for the assassination with inflammatory rhetoric. Shouts of "Rabin is a traitor" and "Rabin is a murderer" often erupted at anti-government rallies.

Mr. Rabin's successor, Shimon Peres, said Friday that despite the shock of the

assassination, there were still some in Israel who supported political violence.

"I will never forgive the people who called Yitzhak Rabin a traitor, nor of course he who aimed a pistol at him," Mr. Peres told student members of his Labour Party.

"To my great regret there are hundreds, perhaps thousands more people in Israel, even today, who favour violence, murder. These people I will never forgive. They are a cancer in the body of the nation."

However, many right-wing activists complained that Mr. Peres is using the backlash against the right-wing to broaden support for his policies.

On Thursday, some 100 followers of the Zu Artzeinu protest group, wearing witches' hats and broom sticks, marched in the streets of the Tel Aviv suburb of Petach Tikva.

"Since Rabin was killed, the media and politicians have gone out on an unprecedented brainwashing campaign," said Moshe Feiglin, the leader of the group which has blocked roads and seized West Bank hilltops in recent months to try and stop the Palestinian autonomy agreement.

"This is a witch hunt par excellence," said Mr. Feiglin.

(Continued on page 7)

Huge Japanese reactor shut down after leak

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japan's Monju fast-breeder reactor stopped operating late Friday in central Japan after smoke poured from its cooling device, but there was no danger of a radiation leak, a government official said.

The official from the Power and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) said no one was injured in the accident in the prototype reactor at its Tsuruga plant in Fukui prefecture.

It was its first accidental shutdown since the reactor started generating electricity in Aug. 29, four months behind schedule after 10 years under construction.

The \$6 billion reactor, designed to produce more plutonium than it consumes, was scheduled to begin full-power generating tests in June next year.

"We manually shut down the reactor when we found sodium leaking from the secondary cooling system," a spokesman for the PNC said. There was no fear of radiation leakage, he said.

It was not clear when the reactor would resume normal operations, a spokesman for the science and technology agency said. "It might take a while before it will resume operations because we must ensure safety first," he said.

Monju, located on the coast at Tsuruga northwest of Tokyo, is the world's second largest fast-breeder reactor

and the cornerstone of Japan's ambitious nuclear power programme.

It started operations in August after a decade of technical delays and costly preparations.

Named Monju after the Buddhist saint of wisdom, the reactor was scheduled to begin a test run on Tuesday generating 14 megawatts of power.

Japan launched the project in 1985 to build the "dream" reactor, a fast-breeder designed to produce more nuclear fuel than it consumes.

It cost 590 billion yen (\$6.2 billion) to build Monju, which is double the cost of a conventional 500 megawatt light-water reactor.

Monju will eventually produce 280 megawatts of electricity, making it the world's second largest fast-breeder reactor after the French Phenix.

PNC planned the start-up last April but a pre-test run was shut down in March because of a problem with its steam control system. It was restarted in May only to be shut down again due to further problems.

PNC hoped Monju would begin supplying electricity to the commercial grid sometime next year.

Despite criticism against the need to ship nuclear waste to and from European reprocessing facilities to

(Continued on page 7)

Wayward manatee escapes captors in Houston bayou

HOUSTON (R) — A wayward manatee lost in a bayou near downtown Houston for the past week eluded captors trying to net the half-tonne mammal.

While hundreds of people looked on, the 8-foot long manatee, also known as a sea cow, slipped out of a 250-foot net and swam into deeper water near a sewage treatment plant. "We'll make another run at it tomorrow," said one member of a crew flown in from Florida to help catch the manatee. Dubbed "Hou" by the local media, the manatee spent the past week bathing in warm water discharged from the wastewater treatment plant into Buffalo Bayou, which feeds into Houston's ship channel, a meandering canal lined with oil refineries. The manatee, which eats up to 50 pounds of vegetation a day, has feasted on hundreds of pounds of vegetables between forays up and down the channel. U.S. fish and wildlife experts believe the manatee swam to Houston from either Florida or Mexico.

Is a dog on a motorcycle a person?

LOS ANGELES (R) — When is a dog a person, legally? Ask the California Highway Patrol. Jeremiah Gerbracht has given rides to his pet pooches on his 1986 Harley-Davidson motorcycle for years, but recently he was pulled over by a highway patrol who spotted his husky — also called Harley — crouching on the gas tank as he sped along. Mr. Gerbracht, a member of ABATE, a bikers' rights organisation, told the officer the California motor vehicle code does not prohibit dogs from riding on motorcycles. The officer was not convinced and ticketed Mr. Gerbracht, citing the rule that prohibits a "person" from riding on a part of a motorcycle not designated for passengers.

Mr. Gerbracht told the Los Angeles Times he is fighting the ticket.

Clinton turns on Christmas lights

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton switched on the national Christmas tree lights and then lifted to the stage Catherine Hamill, the Irish girl who welcomed him to Belfast last week with a Christmas wish that peace prevail. During the tree-lighting ceremony, which dates back to 1913, Mr. Clinton referred to his recent trip to Britain and Ireland and highlighted peace efforts around the world. "Let us bless the peacemakers at this Christmas time from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to our own troops in Bosnia," Mr. Clinton said. "Let us pray especially for our peacemakers, those who will go to Bosnia and those who are soon to come home from Haiti." Mr. Clinton then pushed a button to turn on more than 6,000 lights draped over a 40-foot, living Colorado blue spruce.

Beatles release first single for 25 years

LONDON (R) — The Beatles Monday released their first single in 25 years with John Lennon's raspy voice echoing from Beyond the Grave in Free As A Bird. But bookmakers say they could be kept from the coveted number one slot by Michael Jackson whose new single Earth Song rocketed straight to the top on its release.

Greek politics seesaws in line with Papandreou's health

ATHENS (AFP) — For some three weeks, Greece has been riding the ups and downs of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's failing health — when his condition worsens, the country turns a leaf on his rule; when it improves, talk of succession becomes taboo.

Friday, two days after the wily 76-year-old statesman underwent a successful tracheotomy — which involves opening the windpipe — to help him breathe, his condition was officially described as satisfactory.

Mr. Papandreou has been hospitalised at the Onassis cardiac centre since Nov. 20 for pneumonia, which doctors say has now been eliminated.

Official spokesman Tele-makis Hytiris said Friday Mr. Papandreou could leave hospital by the end of the year.

"The doctors hope to believe that, if all continues to go well, Mr. Papandreou, 76, will leave hospital shortly before or shortly after the end

of year festivities," Mr. Hytiris added.

Mr. Papandreou sat for the first time yesterday and ate chicken soup and jelly, an official told AFP. "He does not have to lie down all the time. If there is no new complication, one can say we are entering a convalescence phase."

A medical bulletin published by the Onassis centre added the premier "was able to sit on a chair for two hours and his condition is stable."

But it said Mr. Papandreou was still breathing with the help of a respirator and undergoing regular kidney dialysis treatment to purify his blood.

Questioned about the role of the premier's wife Dimitra Papandreou, who has not left her husband's bedside since Nov. 20, Mr. Hytiris Friday denied rumours she had telephoned ministers to give them advice.

He also counselled caution to the socialist deputies tempted to turn the page of Papan-

dreism once and for all.

Since the prime minister was admitted to hospital last month, he has gone through several phases, each closely monitored by the political establishment.

During the first week, medical bulletins reported a steady improvement of his condition, saying he was recovering from pneumonia affecting his left lung. Then they took on an alarmist tone highlighting kidney trouble and the need for artificial kidney support.

More than 1,400 journalists, virtually camped at the Onassis centre where the seventh floor was turned into an annex of parliament.

Deputies of the ruling PASOK socialist party as well as government circles began planning the "post-Papandreou era" and talk of succession was no longer taboo.

As the jockeying intensified among two rival camps, Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis, Interior Minister

and acting Premier Akis Tsohatzopoulos and Costas Simitis, a former minister and one of PASOK's leading lights, emerged as frontrunners to step into Mr. Papandreou's shoes.

Miltiades Evert, leader of the main opposition New Democracy Party, asked Mr. Papandreou's personal doctor, Dimitris Kremastinos, and the Onassis clinic in separate letters to publish more precise details about the premier's condition.

Mr. Tsohatzopoulos met with President Costis Stephanopoulos on Wednesday to discuss items on the agenda of the European Union (EU) summit next week. The acting premier is to represent Greece at the meeting in Madrid, and the decision moved to speculation that he is the most likely candidate for the premiership.

Costas Simitis, who heads the socialist PASOK party's pro-reform wing, and Parliament Speaker Apostolos Kaklamanis — two other

possible successors — also met Wednesday.

The infighting within PASOK over the selection process and the proliferation of candidates stepping forward was seen as a threat to party unity.

But since Wednesday's tracheotomy, the disease has moved into yet another phase. Mr. Papandreou's family and aides now talk of possible recovery and the pro-government press is leaking out tidbits such as "Papandreou asks for Sinatra's records," "He had ice cream" or "asked for his komboloi (beads)."

However, PASOK remains torn between two impulses: It must not give the impression that it is burying its founder, but at the same time it is duty-bound to prepare for life without Mr. Papandreou.

Friday, PASOK's 18-member executive and secretary-general Costas Skandalidis were to meet with 400 regional party cadres.